



No. XXXI]

Contents

[MAY 1885

White Heather: a Novel. Chapters XVII.—XX.	PAGE 1
By WILLIAM BLACK	
The Upper Air	38
By ROBERT H. SCOTT	
A Very Pretty Quarrel	47
By E. LENNOX PEEL	
On some Modern Abuses of Language (<i>concluded</i>)	53
By EDWARD A. FREEMAN, LL.D.	
An Idyl of the Bow	65
By AVONVALE	
An Apostle of the Tules	67
By BRET HARTE	
Prince Otto: a Romance. Book I. Chapter IV.	
Book II. Chapters I.—II.	89
By R. L. STEVENSON	

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CONTENTS:—

- | | |
|--|--|
| I. LAND TENURE IN SCOTLAND. | VI. INDIA—WHAT CAN IT TEACH US? |
| II. PRINCE BISMARCK SKETCHED BY HIS SECRETARY. | VII. PAST AND PRESENT STATE OF THE NAVY. |
| III. THE MARITIME ALPS. | VIII. LIFE AND LETTERS OF GEORGE ELIOT. |
| IV. THE ARMY OF INDIA. | IX. LETTERS OF THE MARQUISE DE COIGNY. |
| V. MEMOIRS OF M. DE VITROLLES. | X. THREE REFORM BILLS. |

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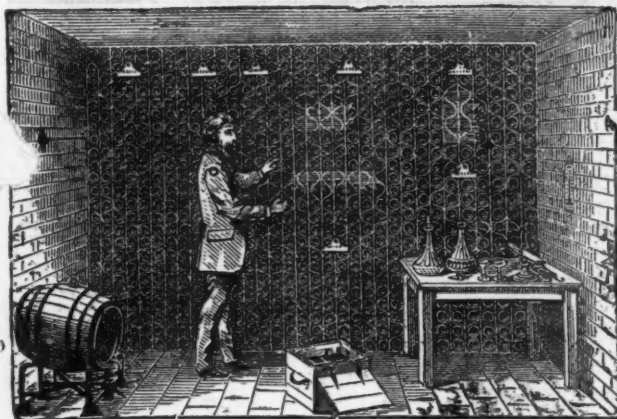
LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

MAY 1885.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
WHITE HEATHER: A NOVEL. By WILLIAM BLACK]	1
Chapter XVII.—A Further Discovery.	
" XVIII.—Confessions.	
" XIX.—Hesitations.	
" XX.—'Among the Untrodden Ways.'	
THE UPPER AIR. By ROBERT H. SCOTT	38
A VERY PRETTY QUARREL. By E. LENNOX PEEL	47
ON SOME MODERN ABUSES OF LANGUAGE (<i>concluded</i>). By EDWARD A. FREEMAN, LL.D.	53
AN IDYL OF THE BOW. By AVONVALE.	65
AN APOSTLE OF THE TULE. By BRET HARTE	67
PRINCE OTTO: A ROMANCE. By R. L. STEVENSON	89
<i>Book I.—Prince Errant.</i>	
Chapter IV.—In which the Prince collects opinions by the way.	
<i>Book II.—Of Love and Politics.</i>	
Chapter I.—What happened in the Library.	
" II.—'On the Court of Grünewald,' being a portion of the Traveller's Manuscript.	

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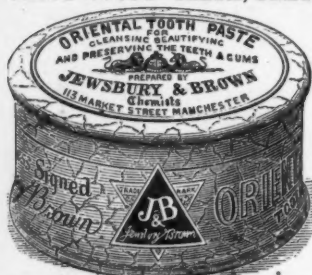
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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

MAY 1885.

White Heather:

A NOVEL.

BY WILLIAM BLACK.

CHAPTER XVII.

A FURTHER DISCOVERY.

IT can hardly be wondered at that these suddenly-presented ambitious projects—this call to be up and doing, and getting forward in the general race of the world—should add a new interest and fascination, in his eyes, to the society of the American father and daughter who had wandered into these distant wilds. And perhaps, after all, he had been merely wasting his time?—and throwing away his life? That solitary, contented, healthy and happy existence was a mistake—an idle dream—an anachronism, even? The common way of the world was right; and that, as he heard of it in the echoes brought by these strangers from without, was all a pushing and striving and making the most of opportunities, until the end was reached—independence and ease and wealth; the power of choosing this or that continent for a residence; the radiant happiness and glow of success. And then it all seemed so easy and practicable when he heard these two talking about their friends and the fortunes they had made; and it seemed still more easy—and a far more desirable and beautiful thing—when it was Miss Carry herself who was speaking, she seated alone in the stern of the boat, her eyes—that had a kind of surface darkness and softness, like blackberries wet with rain—helping out her speech, and betraying an open friendliness, and

even conferring a charm on her descriptions of that far-off pork-producing city of the west. Mr. Hodson, as he sate upright in his easy-chair before the fire, spoke slowly and sententiously, and without any visible enthusiasm: Miss Carry, in the stern of the coble, her face all lit up with the blowing winds and the sunlight, talked with far greater vivacity, and was obviously deeply interested in the future of her companion. And it had come to this now, that, as she sate opposite him, he quite naturally and habitually regarded her eyes, as supplementing her meaning; he no longer rather shrank from the directness of her look; he no longer wished that she would sit the other way, and attend to the tops of the salmon-rods. As for their speech together, the exceeding frankness of it and lack of conventionality arose from one or two causes, but no doubt partly from this—that during their various adventures on the loch there was no time for the observance of studied forms. It was ‘Do this’ and ‘Do that,’ on his part—sometimes with even a sharp word of monition; and with her it was ‘Will that do, Ronald?’ or again—when she was standing up in fell encounter with her unseen enemy, both hands engaged with the rod: ‘Ronald, tie my cap down, or the wind will blow it away—No, no, the other strings—underneath!’

And indeed, on the morning after the evening on which they had been urging him to make a career for himself, there was not much chance of any calm discussion of that subject. The proceedings of the day opened in a remarkably lively manner. For one thing the wind had backed still further during the night, and was now blowing briskly from the north; bringing with it from time to time smart snow-showers, that blackened the heavens and earth for a few minutes and then sped on, leaving the peaks and shoulders and even the lower spurs of the hills all a gleaming white in the wintry sunlight.

‘Salmon-fishing in a snow-storm—well, I declare!’ said she, as she stood on the shore of the lake, watching him putting the rods together.

‘The very best time,’ said he, in his positive way (for he had assumed a kind of authority over her: whereas with Meenie he was always reserved and distant and timidly gentle). ‘None better. I would just like to find a foot of snow on the ground, right down to the edge of the loch; and the flakes falling so thick ye couldna see a dozen yards ahead of ye.’

‘Do you know where I should be then?’ she retorted. ‘I should be warming my toes in front of Mrs. Murray’s peat-fire.’

‘Not one bit,’ said he, just as positively. ‘If ye heard the salmon were taking, ye’d be down here fast enough, I’m thinking. And I’m no sure but that this will make a good day, too, just as it is. I would like fine to get a fish before the others came down.’

For there was no doubt a certain harmless rivalry had sprung up between the two boats—at least between the two crews; the professional gillies looking on Ronald as something of an amateur; and he, on his side, pretty confident that his knowledge of enticing lures and also of the shallows and banks and rocks of the loch would eventually place Miss Hodson ahead of her father. At present they were equal.

‘I don’t think it is fair,’ said she. ‘We should wait for them; my father had not so many letters to write, surely.’

‘We’ll try for the fish first; and settle that after,’ said he, as he put the rods in the stern of the boat, and arranged everything for her comfort.

And presently it seemed as if this early start of theirs was to be rewarded; for scarcely were both lines out—and Miss Carry was just settling herself down for a little quiet talk, and was pulling the collar of her ulster higher over her ears (for the wind was somewhat cold), when a sudden rugging and straining of one of the rods, followed by a sharp scream of the reel, upset all these little plans. She made a dash at the rod and raised it quickly; Ronald got hold of the other one; and gaily he laughed as he reeled in the line.

‘Quick work!’ he cried. ‘It would be just glorious now, if we had a fish to show them when they come down!’

‘I wish the beast wouldn’t come so near the boat,’ said she—working at the reel with all the power of her wrist, and even then scarcely able to keep a proper strain on the salmon, that seemed to be coming closer and closer, with neither spring nor rush nor sulking.

‘We’ll pull away from him directly,’ Ronald said (for he was still engaged in getting in the line of the second rod). ‘Pull away, Johnnie, lad—pull away, man!’

And then, as quickly as he could, he put the rod down, and got hold of his oar again. But what was this dreadful thing that happened—all in one wild and frantic moment? Down went the fish with a tremendous rush—and then—before she could call out, or even know what was taking place—in came the line straight to the boat with a surprising swiftness.

'Lift your oar!' shouted Ronald to the lad.

But it was too late. No one could have foreseen or guarded against this sudden rush of the fish right underneath the boat. The line touched the oar; it hung there for half a second with a strain; in vain the lad tried to lift the oar away, in vain she tried to lower the top so as to lessen that deadly pull; suddenly the rod became quite limp and upright and useless in her hand, and the broken trace was flying high in the air.

'God bless me!' Ronald cried.

She looked on, helpless and aghast.

'Well,' said he, with as much resignation as he could command—and he reached over and took the rod from her, 'it couldna be helped—it was no fault o' yours that we lost that one. The beast—to come right under the boat! And ye needna blame the lad, Miss Hodson—he had no time to get the oar out of the way—'

'Oh, I don't blame anyone!' said she, eagerly (for she rather fancied in her desperation that he was going to scold her and accuse her of losing the fish through her own stupidity). 'Oh, no; of course not; of course not. It was a misfortune—how could it have been helped? Besides, there are more salmon in the lake.'

'The beast!' Ronald muttered to himself, as he pondered over the tin box. 'He has taken away my best sole-skin minnow.'

'Oh, I hope it won't hurt the poor thing much!' she cried.

'It would have hurt him less,' he answered, grimly, 'if he had waited to be taken into the boat here. But I dare say he'll work it out of his jaw in time.'

He rigged up another trace and minnow; and by and by both lines were out again, and they on their way. But he was rather sullen and vexed; and she forbore speaking to him, as she had intended, about the fishing-parties on Lake Michigan, and her experiences of such things.

'There are the others coming down now,' said he, gloomily. 'We should have been one ahead of them.'

'But surely it doesn't matter much——' she said— or rather, she had but half said it when again the reel went out with a screech—a long, shrill screech that lasted even after she had the rod in her hands and could feel the line whirling out underneath her glove.

'That's a good fish—that's a good fish!' Ronald cried, with his mouth set hard. 'Now let's see if we canna hold on to this

one. Let him go, lassie!—I beg your pardon—let him go—let him go—that's right—a clean fish, and a beauty!

For the salmon, at the end of the long rush, had made a spring out of the water—a flashing, beautiful thing he looked above the dark and driven waves—and now they were quietly backing down the boat on him, and she was rapidly reeling up the line.

'Ronald,' she said, 'if I lose another fish, I'll go home.'

'It was no fault o' yours, Miss Hodson,' said he, laying some slight emphasis on her proper title, for he was conscious he had made a blunder a minute or so before. 'And now we'll see if we cannot have one before they come along after all. You're doing well. That's right. Take it easy. It was no fault o' yours. I would rather than five shillings this was a good fish.'

Good or no, the salmon had no hesitation about showing himself, at least; for now he began to lash the surface of the water, some fifty yards away, not springing into the air, but merely beating the waves with head and body and tail to get rid of this unholy thing that he had pursued and gripped. Then down he went with a mighty plunge—the reel whirring out its shrill cry, and Miss Carry's gloves suffering in consequence—and there he sulked; so that they backed the boat again, and again she got in some of the line. What was the sound that came across the lake to them, in the face of the northerly wind?

'They're waving a handkerchief to ye, Miss Hodson,' said he, 'from the other boat.'

'Oh, bother!' said she (for the strain of a heavy salmon and forty yards of line was something on her arms); 'here, take the handkerchief from this breast-pocket, and wave it back to them—stand up beside me—they won't see the difference—'

He did as he was bid; apparently she paid little attention; she seemed wholly bent on getting this fish, after her recent misfortune. And clearly the salmon had somewhat exhausted himself with his first escapades; he now lay deep down, not stirring an inch; so that she got in her line until there was not more than twenty yards out: then they waited.

And meanwhile this strange thing that was overtaking them? The bright, windy, changeable day—with its gleaming snow-slopes, and sunlit straths and woods darkened by passing shadows—seemed to be slowly receding from them, and around them came a kind of hushed and stealthy gloom. And then the wind stirred again; the gusts came sharper and colder; here and there a wet particle

stung the cheek or the back of the hand. Of course, she was in a death-struggle with a salmon; she could not heed. And presently the gathering blackness all around seemed to break into a soft bewilderment of snow; large, soft, woolly flakes came driving along before the wind; all the world was shut out from them; they could see nothing but a short space of livid dark water, and feel nothing but this choking silent thing in the air. And then again, with a magical rapidity, the heavens and the earth seemed to open above and around them; the clouds swept on; there was a great deep of dazzling blue suddenly revealed in the sky overhead; and all the dancing waters of the lake, from the boat to the farthest shores, were one flashing and lapping mass of keen, pure cobalt, absolutely bewildering to the eyes. The joy of that radiant colour, after the mystery and the darkness! And then the sunlight broke out; and Clebrig had a touch of gold along his mighty shoulders; and Ben Loyal's snow-slopes were white against the brilliant blue; and it seemed as if the fairest of soft summer skies were shining over Bonnie Strath-Naver.

To her it meant that she could see a little more clearly. She shook the snow-flakes from her hair.

'Ronald, you are sure it is not a kelt?'

'Indeed I am. There's nothing of the kelt about that one.'

'If it is,' said she, 'I'll go home and tell my ma. I don't want to be given away twice in one morning.'

She was clearly feeling a little more secure about this one, though he could make nothing of her recondite sayings. And she did capture the creature in the end, though it was after a long and arduous struggle. For he was a strong fish—fresh run up from the sea, and heavy for his size; and again and again, and a dozen times repeated, he would make rushes away from the boat just as they thought he was finally showing the white feather. It was the toughest fight she had had; but practice was hardening her muscles a little; and she had acquired a little dexterity in altering her position and shifting the strain. By this time the other boat was coming round.

'Stick to him, Carry!' her father cried. 'No Secesh tactics allowed: hold on to him!'

But the next moment Ronald had settled all that by a smart scoop of the clip; and there in the bottom of the boat lay a small-headed deep-shouldered fish of just over sixteen pounds—Ronald pinning him down to get the minnow out of his jaw, and the lad Johnnie grinning all over his ruddy face with delight.

'We're ahead now, Ronald,' said he, in an undertone, 'in spite o' the one that broke away.'

'He's a fine fish, this one, Miss Hodson,' Ronald said. 'He is not a couple o' days in the loch. And well ye worked him—well ye worked him—I will say that.'

Miss Carry looked on in a very calm and business-like fashion; though in reality her heart was beating quickly—with gladness and exultation. And then, with the same business-like calmness, she took from the deep pocket of her ulster a flask that she had borrowed from Mr. Murray.

'Ronald,' said she, 'you must drink to our good luck.'

She handed him the flask. She appeared to be quite to the manner born now. You would not have imagined that her heart was beating so quickly, or her hands just a little bit nervous and shaky after that prolonged excitement.

Good luck seemed to follow the Duke's boat this morning—to make up for the disastrous beginning. Within the next three-quarters of an hour they had got hold of another salmon—just over ten pounds. And it was barely lunch-time when they had succeeded in landing a third—this time a remarkably handsome fish of fifteen pounds. She now thought she had done enough. She resumed her seat contentedly; there was no elation visible on her face. But she absolutely forbade the putting out of the lines again.

'We are to have luncheon down at the bay,' said he. 'There is better shelter there.'

'Very well,' said she.

'And we'll be going over a very good bit of ground,' he suggested, again.

'Very well.'

'And I think the other boat has got a fish too.'

'So much the better.'

'Will ye no put out the lines?'

'Now, look here, Ronald,' she said, seriously. 'What do you think I came here for? Do you think I came here to leave my bones in a foreign land? I am just about dead now. My arms are not made of steel. We can go ashore, and get lunch unpacked; the other boat will follow quickly enough. I tell you my arms and wrists have just had about enough for one morning.'

And a very snug and merry little luncheon-party they made there—down by the side of the lapping water, and under the shelter of a wood of young birch trees. For the other boat had brought

ashore two salmon; so that the five handsome fish, laid side by side on a broad slab of rock, made an excellent show. Miss Carry said nothing about her arms aching; but she did not seem to be in as great a hurry as the others to set to work again. No; she enjoyed the rest; and, observing that Ronald had finished his lunch, she called to him, under the pretext of wanting to know something about sending the fish south. This led on to other things; the three of them chatting together contentedly enough; and Ronald even making bold enough to light his pipe. A very friendly little group this was—away by themselves there in these wintry solitudes—with the wide blue waters of the lake in front of them, and the snows of Clebrig white against the sky. And if he were to go away from these familiar scenes, might he not come back again, in the after days? And with the splendid power of remaining or going, just as he pleased?—just as these friendly folk could, who spoke so lightly of choosing this or that quarter of the globe for their temporary habitation? Yes, there were many things that money could do: these two strangers, now, could linger here at Inver-Mudal just as long as the salmon-fishing continued to amuse them; or they could cross over to Paris, and see the wonders there; or they could go away back to the great cities and harbours and lakes and huge hotels that they spoke so much about. He listened with intensest interest, and with a keen imagination. And was this part of the shore around them—with its rocks and brushwood and clear water—really like the shores of Lake George, where she was so afraid of rattlesnakes? She said she would send him some photographs of Lake Michigan.

Then in the boat in the afternoon she quite innocently remarked that she wished he was going back home with them; for that he would find the voyage across the Atlantic so amusing. She described the people coming out to say good-bye at Liverpool; and the throwing of knives and pencil-cases and what not as farewell gifts, from the steamer to the tender, and *vice versa*; she described the scamper round Queenstown and the waiting for the mails; then the long days on the wide ocean, with all the various occupations, and the concerts in the evening, and the raffles in the smoking-room (this from hearsay); then the crowding on deck for the first glimpse of the American coast-line; and the gliding over the shallows of Sandy Hook; and the friends who would come steaming down the Bay to wave handkerchiefs and welcome them home. She seemed to regard it as a quite natural and simple thing that he should be of this party; and that, after

landing, her father should take him about and 'see him through,' as it were; and if her fancy failed to carry out these forecasts, and to picture him walking along Dearborn Avenue or driving out with them to Washington Park, it was that once or twice ere now she had somehow arrived at the notion that Ronald Strang and Chicago would prove to be incongruous. Or was it some instinctive feeling that, however natural and fitting their friendship might be in this remote little place in the Highlands, it might give rise to awkwardness over there? Anyhow, that could not prevent her father from seeing that Ronald had ample introductions and guidance when he landed at New York; and was not that the proper sphere for one of his years and courage and abilities?

When they got ashore at the end of the day, it was found that each boat had got two more salmon, so that there was a display of nine big fish on the grass there, in the gathering dusk.

'And to think that I should live to catch five salmon in one day,' said Miss Carry, as she contemplated her share of the spoil. 'Well, no one will believe it; for they're just real mean people at home; and they won't allow that anything's happened to you in Europe unless you have something to show for it. I suppose Ronald would give me a written guarantee. Anyway, I am going to take that big one along to the Doctor—it will be a good introduction, won't it, pappa?'

But a curious thing happened about that same salmon. When they got to the inn, the fish were laid out on the stone flags of the dairy—the coolest and safest place for them in the house; and Miss Carry, who had come along to see them, when she wanted anything done, naturally turned to Ronald.

'Ronald,' said she, 'I want to give that big one to Mrs. Douglas; and I am going along now to the cottage. Will you carry it for me?'

He said something about getting a piece of string, and left. A couple of minutes thereafter the lad Johnnie appeared, with a stout bit of cord in his hand; and he, having affixed that to the head and the tail of the salmon, caught it up, and stood in readiness. She seemed surprised.

'Where is Ronald?' said she—for he was always at her bidding.

'He asked me to carry the fish to the doctor's house, mem,' said the lad. 'Will I go now?'

Moreover, this salmon was accidentally responsible for a still further discovery. When Miss Carry went along to call on the Douglasses, little Maggie was with her friend Meenie; and they all of them had tea together; and, when the little Maggie considered it fitting she should go home, Miss Carry said she would accompany her—for it was now quite dark. And they had a good deal of talk by the way, partly about schooling and accomplishments, but much more largely about Ronald, who was the one person in all the world in the eyes of his sister. And if Maggie was ready with her information, this pretty young lady was equally interested in receiving it, and also in making inquiries. And thus it came about that Miss Carry now for the first time learned that Ronald was in the habit of writing poems, verses, and things of that kind; and that they were greatly thought of by those who had seen them or to whom he had sent them.

‘Why, I might have guessed as much,’ she said to herself, as she walked on alone to the inn—though what there was in Ronald’s appearance to suggest that he was a writer of rhymes it might have puzzled anyone to determine.

But this was a notable discovery; and it set her quick and fertile brain working in a hundred different ways; but mostly she bethought her of one John C. Huysen and of a certain newspaper-office on Fifth Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

‘Well, there,’ she said to herself, as the result of these rapid cogitations, ‘if Jack Huysen’s good for anything—if he wants to say he has done me a service—if he wants to show he has the spirit of a man in him—well, *now’s his chance.*’

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONFESSIONS.

It was but another instance of the curiously magnetic influence of this man’s personality that she instantly and unhesitatingly assumed that what he wrote must be of value. Now every second human being, as well she knew, writes verses at one period of his life; and these are mostly trash; and remain discreetly hidden, or are mercifully burned. But what Ronald wrote, she was already certain, must be characteristic of himself, and have interest, and definite worth; and what better could she do than

get hold of some of these things, and have them introduced to the public, perhaps with some little preliminary encomiums written by a friendly hand? She had heard from the little Maggie that Ronald had never sent any of his writings to the newspapers: might not this be a service? She could not offer him a sovereign because he happened to be in the boat when she caught her first salmon; but fame—the appeal to the wide-reading public—the glory of print? Nay, might they not be of some commercial value also? She knew but little of the customs of the Chicago journals; but she guessed that a roundabout hint conveyed to Mr. John C. Huysen would not be without effect. And what were the subjects, she asked herself, that Ronald wrote about? In praise of deer-stalking, for one thing, and mountain-climbing, and out-of-door life, she felt assured: you could see it in his gait and in his look; you could hear it in his laugh, and his singing as he went along the road. Politics, perhaps—if sarcastic verses were in his way; for there was a sharp savour running through his talk; and he took abundant interest in public affairs. Or perhaps he would be for recording the charms of some rustic maiden—some ‘Jessie the Flower of Dumblane’—some blue-eyed and rather silent and uninteresting young person, living alone in a glen, and tending cattle or hanging out things to dry on a hedge? Well, even a song would be something. The *Chicago Citizen* might not pay very much for it; but the great and generous public might take kindly to it; and if Jack Huysen did not say something friendly about it, then she would know the reason why.

But the stiffest struggle Miss Carry ever had with any salmon was mere child’s play compared with the fight she had with Ronald himself over this matter. At first he was exceedingly angry that she should have been told; but then he laughed; and said to her that there were plenty of folk in Scotland as elsewhere who wrote idle verses, but that they had the common sense to say nothing about it. If she wanted a memento of her stay in the Highlands to take back with her to America, he would give her her choice of the deer-skins he had in the shed; that would be appropriate—and she was welcome to the best of them; but as for scribblings and nonsense of that kind—no, no. On the other hand, she was just as persistent; and treated him to a little gentle raillery—wondering that he had not yet outgrown the years of shyness; and finally, when everything else had failed, putting her request as a grace and courtesy to be granted to an American

stranger. This was hardly fair; but she was very anxious about the matter; and she knew that her demand was founded far less on mere curiosity than on an honest desire to do him a service.

Of course he yielded; and a terrible time he had of it the night he set about selecting something to show to her. For how could she understand the circumstances in which these random things were written—these idle fancies of a summer morning—these careless love songs—these rhymed epistles in which the practical common sense and shrewd advice were much more conspicuous than any graces of art. And then again so many of them were about Meenie; and these were forbidden; the praise of Meenie—even when it was the birds and the roses and the foxgloves and the summer rills that sang of her—was not for alien eyes. But at last he lit upon some verses supposed to convey the sentiments of certain exiles met together on 'New Year's Night in Nova Scotia; and he thought it was a simple kind of thing; at all events it would get him out of a grievous difficulty. So—for the lines had been written many a day ago, and came upon him now with a new aspect—he altered a phrase here or there, by way of passing the time; and finally he made a fair copy. The next morning, being a Sunday, he espied Miss Carry walking down towards the river; and he overtook her and gave her this little piece to redeem his pledge.

'It's not worth much,' said he, 'but you'll understand what it is about. Burn it when you've read it—that's all I ask of ye'—then on he went, glad not to be cross-questioned, the faithful Harry trotting at his heels.

So she sat down on the stone parapet of the little bridge—on this hushed, still, shining morning that was quite summer-like in its calm—and opened the paper with not a little curiosity. And well enough she understood the meaning of the little piece: she knew that the Mackays¹ used to live about here; and was not Strath-Naver but a few miles off; and this the very Mudal river running underneath the bridge on which she was sitting? But here are the verses she read—and he had entitled them

ACROSS THE SEA.

*In Nova Scotia's clime they've met
To keep the New Year's night;
The merry lads and lasses crowd
Around the blazing light.*

¹ Pronounced *Mackise*—with the accent on the second syllable,

*But father and mother sit withdrawn
To let their fancies flee
To the old, old time, and the old, old home
That's far across the sea.*

*And what strange sights and scenes are these
That sadden their shaded eyes?
Is it only thus they can see again
The land of the Mackays?*

*O there the red deer roam at will;
And the grouse whirr on the wing;
And the curlew call, and the ptarmigan
Drink at the mountain spring;*

*And the hares lie snug on the hill-side;
And the lusty black-cock crows;
But the river the children used to love
Through an empty valley flows.*

*Do they see again a young lad wait
To shelter with his plaid,
When she steals to him in the gathering dusk,
His gentle Highland maid?*

*Do they hear the pipes at the weddings;
Or the low, sad, funeral wail
As the boat goes out to the island,
And the pibroch tells its tale?*

*O fair is Naver's strath, and fair
The strath that Mudal laves;
And dear the haunts of our childhood,
And dear the old folks' graves;*

*And the parting from one's native land
Is a sorrow hard to dree:
God's forgiveness to them that sent us
So far across the sea!*

*And is Bonnie Strath-Naver shining,
As it shone in the bygone years?—
As it shines for us now—ay, ever—
Though our eyes are blind with tears!*

Well, her own eyes were moist—though that was but for a moment; for when she proceeded to walk slowly and meditatively back to the inn, her mind was busy with many things; and she

began to think that she had not got any way near to the understanding of this man, whom she had treated in so familiar a fashion, as boatman, and companion, and gillie—almost as valet. What lay behind those eyes of his—that glowed with so strange a light at times, and seemed capable of reading her through and through, only that the slightly tremulous eyelids came down and veiled them, or that he turned away his head? And why this strain of pathos in a nature that seemed essentially joyous and glad and careless? Not only that, but in the several discussions with her father—occasionally becoming rather warm, indeed—Ronald had been invariably on the side of the landlord, as was naturally to be expected. He had insisted that the great bulk of the land given over to deer was of no possible use to any other living creature; he had maintained the right of the landlord to clear any portion of his property of sheep, and forest it, if by so doing he could gain an increase of rental; he had even maintained the right of the landlord to eject non-paying tenants from holdings clearly not capable of supporting the ever-increasing families; and so forth. But was his feeling, after all, with the people—he himself being one of the people? His stout championship of the claims and privileges of Lord Ailine—that was not incompatible with a deeper sense of the cruelty of driving the poor people away from the land of their birth and the home of their childhood? His natural sentiment as a man was not to be overborne by the fact that he was officially a dependent on Lord Ailine? These and a good many other curious problems concerning him—and concerning his possible future—occupied her until she had got back to the snug little parlour; and there, as she found her father seated in front of the blazing fire, and engaged in getting through the mighty pile of newspapers and illustrated journals and magazines that had come by the previous day's mail, she thought she might as well sit down and write a long letter to her bosom friend in Chicago, through whose intermediation these verses might discreetly be brought to the notice of Mr. Huysen. She had reasons for not asking any favour directly.

‘Dearest Em,’ she wrote—after having studied a long while as to how she should begin—‘would it surprise you to know that I have at last found my *fate*, in the very handsome person of a Scotch gamekeeper? Well, it ain’t so; don’t you break the furniture; but the fact is my poor brain has been wool-gathering a little in this land of wild storms and legends and romantic ballads; and to-morrow I am fleeing away to Paris—the region of clear atmosphere, and reasonable people, and cynicism; and I

hope to have any lingering cobwebs of romance completely blown out of my head. Not that I would call it romance, *even if it were to happen*; I should call it merely the plain result of my father's theories. You know he is always preaching that all men are born equal; which isn't true anyhow; he would get a little nearer the truth if he was to say that all men are born equal except hotel-clerks, who are of a superior race; but wouldn't it be a joke if I were to take him at his word, and ask him how he would like a gamekeeper as his son-in-law? But you need not be afraid, my dear Em; this chipmunk has still got a little of her senses left; and I may say in the words of the poet—

"There is not in this wide world a valet so sweet"

—no, nor any Claude Melnotte of a gardener, nor any handsome coachman or groom, who could induce me to run away with him. It would be "playing it too low down on pa," as you used to say; besides, one knows how these things always end. Another besides; how do I know that he would marry me, even if I asked him?—and I *should* have to ask him, for he would never ask me. Now, Em, if you don't burn this letter the moment you have read it, I will murder you, as sure as you are alive.

'Besides, it is a shame. He is a real good fellow; and no such nonsense has got into his head, I know. I know it, because I tried him twice for fun; I got him to tie my cap under my chin; and I made him take my pocket-handkerchief out of my breast-pocket when I was fighting a salmon (I caught *five in one day*—monsters!) and do you think the bashful young gentleman was embarrassed and showed trembling fingers? Not a bit; I think he thought me rather a nuisance—in the polite phraseology of the English people. But I wish I could tell you about him, really. It's all very well to say he is very handsome, and hardy-looking, and weather-tanned; but how can I describe to you how respectful his manner is, and yet always keeping his own self-respect, and he won't quarrel with me—he only laughs when I have been talking absolute folly—though papa and he have rare fights, for he has very positive opinions, and sticks to his guns, I can tell you. But the astonishing thing is his education; he has been nowhere, but seems to know everything; he seems to be quite content to be a gamekeeper, though his brother took his degree at college and is now in the Scotch Church. I tell you he makes me feel pretty small at times. The other night pappa and I went along to his cottage after dinner; and found him reading Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire—lent him by his

brother, it appeared. I borrowed the first volume—but, oh, squawks! it is a good deal too stiff work for the likes of me. And then there is never the least pretence or show, but all the other way; he will talk to you as long as you like about his deer-stalking and about what he has seen his dogs do; but never a word about books or writing—unless you happen to have found out.

‘Now I’m coming to business. I have never seen any writing of his until this morning, when, after long goading, he showed me a little poem which I will copy out and enclose in this letter when I have finished. Now, darling Em, I want you to do me a real kindness; the first time you see Jack Huysen—I don’t want to ask the favour of him direct—will you ask him to print it in the *Citizen*, and to say something nice about it? I don’t want any patronage: understand—I mean let Jack Huysen understand—that Ronald Strang is a particular *friend* of both my father and myself; and that I am sending you this without his authority, but merely to give him a little pleasant surprise, perhaps, when he sees it in print; and perhaps to tempt him to give us some more. I should like him to print a volume—for he is really far above his present station, and it is absurd he should not take his *place*—and if he did that I know of a young party who would buy 500 copies even if she were to go back home without a single Paris bonnet. Tell Jack Huysen there is to be *no patronage*, mind; there is to be nothing about the peasant poet, or anything like that; for this man is a *gentleman*, if I know anything about it; and I won’t have him trotted out as a phenomenon—to be discussed by the dudes who smoke cigarettes in Lincoln Park. If you could only talk to him for ten minutes, it would be better than fifty letters—but I suppose there are *attractions nearer home* just at present. My kind remembrances to T. T.

‘I forgot to say that I am quite ignorant as to whether newspapers ever pay for poetry—I mean if a number of pieces were sent? Or could Jack Huysen find a publisher who would undertake a volume; my father will see he does not lose anything by it. I really want to do something for this Ronald, for he has been so kind and attentive to us; and before long it may become more difficult to do so; for of course a man of his abilities is not likely to remain as he is; indeed, he has already formed plans for getting away altogether from his present way of life, and whatever he tries to do I know he will do—and easily. But if I talk any more about him, you will be making very *very* mistaken guesses; and I won’t give you the delight of imagining even for a moment that I have been caught at last; when the sad event

arrives there will be time enough for you to take your cake-walk of triumph up and down the room—of course to *Dancing in the Barn*, as in the days of old.'

Here followed a long and rambling chronicle of her travels in Europe since her last letter, all of which may be omitted; the only point to be remarked was that her very brief experiences of Scotland took up a disproportionately large portion of the space, and that she was minute in her description of the incidents and excitement of salmon-fishing. Then followed an outline of her present plans; a string of questions; a request for an instant reply; and finally—

' With dearest love, old Em,
Thine,
Carry.'

And then she had to copy the verses; but when she had done that, and risen, and gone to the window for a time, some misgiving seemed to enter her mind, for she returned to the table, and sate down again, and wrote this postscript:

' Perhaps, after all, you won't see much in this little piece; if you were here, among the very places, and affected by all the old stories and romantic traditions and the wild scenery, it might be different. Since I've been to Europe I've come to see what's the trouble about our reading English history and literature at home; why, you can't do it; you can't understand it—unless you have lived in an atmosphere that is just full of poetry and romance, and meeting people whose names tell you they belong to the families who did great things in history centuries and centuries ago. I can't explain it very well—not even to myself; but I feel it; why you can't take a single day's drive in England without coming across a hundred things of interest—Norman churches, and the tombs of Saxon kings, and old abbeys, and monasteries, and battlefields, and, just as interesting as any, farm-houses of the sixteenth century in their quaint old-fashioned orchards. And as for Scotland, why, it is just steeped to the lips in poetry and tradition; the hills and the glens have all their romantic stories of the clans, many of them very pathetic; and you want to see these wild and lonely places before you can understand the legends. And in southern Scotland too—what could anyone at home make of such a simple couplet as this—

" *The King sits in Dunfermline town,
Drinking the blude-red wine* "

—but when you come near Dunfermline and see the hill where Malcolm Canmore built his castle in the eleventh century, and when you are told that it was from this very town that Sir Patrick Spens and the Scots lords set out for “Norro-way o’er the faem,” everything comes nearer to you. In America, I remember very well, Flodden Field sounded to us something very far away, that we couldn’t take much interest in; but if you were here just now, dear Em, and told that a bit further north there was a river that the Earl of Caithness and his clan had to cross when they went to Flodden, and that the people living there at this very day won’t go near it on the anniversary of the battle, because on that day the ghosts of the earl and his men, all clad in green tartan, come home again and are seen to cross the river, wouldn’t that interest you? In America we have got nothing behind us; when you leave the day before yesterday, you don’t want to go back. But here, in the most vulgar superstitions and customs, you come upon the strangest things. Would you believe it, less than twenty miles from this place there is a little lake that is supposed to cure the most desperate diseases—diseases that the doctors have given up; and the poor people meet at midnight, on the first Monday after the change of the moon, and then they throw a piece of money into the lake, and go in and dip themselves three times, and then they must get home before sunrise. Perhaps it is very absurd, but they belong to that same imaginative race of people who have left so many weird stories and poetical legends behind them; and what I say is that you want to come over and breathe this atmosphere of tradition and romance, and see the places, before you can quite understand the charm of all that kind of literature. And perhaps you don’t find much in these verses about the poor people who have been driven away from their native strath? Well, they don’t claim to be much. They were never meant for *you* to see. But yes, I do think you will like them; and anyhow Jack Huysen has got to like them, and treat them hospitably, unless he is anxious to have his hair raised.

‘Gracious me, I think I must hire a hall. I have just read this scrawl over. Sounds rather muzzy, don’t it? But it’s this poor brain of mine that has got full of confusion, and cobwebs, and theories of equality, when I wasn’t attending to it. My arms had the whole day’s work to do—as they remind me at this minute; and the Cerebral Hemispheres laid their heads, or their half-heads together, when I was busy with the salmon; and

entered into a conspiracy against me ; and began to make pictures—ghosts, phantom earls, and romantic shepherds and peasant-poets, and I don't know what kind of dreams of a deer-stalker walking down Wabash Avenue. But, as I said, to-morrow I start for Paris, thank goodness ; and in that calmer atmosphere I hope to come to my senses again ; and I will send you a long account of Lily Selden's marriage—though your last letter to me was a fraud : what do I care about the C. M. C. A. ? *This* letter, anyhow, you must burn ; I don't feel like reading it over again myself, or perhaps I would save you the trouble ; but you may depend on it that the one I shall send you from Paris will be quite sane.

'Second P.S.—Of course you must manage Jack Huysen with a little discretion. I don't want to be drawn into it any more than I can help ; I mean, I would just hate to write to him direct and ask him for a particular favour ; but this is a very little one, and you know him as well as any of us. And mind you burn this letter—instantly—the moment you have read it—for it is just full of nonsense and wool-gathering ; and *it will not occur again. Toujours à toi. C. A.*

'What have you been writing all this time ?' her father said, when she rose.

'A letter—to Emma Kerfoot.'

'It will make her stare. You don't often write long letters.'

'I do not,' said she, gravely regarding the envelope ; and then she added, solemnly : 'But this is the record of a chapter in my life that is now closed for ever—at least, I hope so.'

CHAPTER XIX.

HESITATIONS.

THE waggonette stood at the door ; Miss Carry's luggage was put in ; and her father was waiting to see her off. But the young lady herself seemed unwilling to take the final step ; twice she went back into the inn, on some pretence or another ; and each time she came out she looked impatiently around, as if wondering at the absence of some one.

'Well, ain't you ready yet ?' her father asked.

'I want to say good-bye to Ronald,' she said, half angrily.

'Oh, nonsense—you are not going to America. Why, you will be back in ten days or a fortnight. See here, Carry,' he added, 'are you sure you don't want me to go part of the way with you?'

'Not at all,' she said, promptly. 'It is impossible for Mary to mistake the directions I wrote to her; and I shall find her in the Station Hotel at Inverness all right. Don't you worry about me, pappa.'

She glanced along the road again, in the direction of the keeper's cottage; but there was no one in sight.

'Pappa, dear,' she said, in an undertone—for there were one or two onlookers standing by—'if Ronald should decide on giving up his place here, and trying what you suggested, you'll have to stand by him.'

'Oh, yes, I'll see him through,' was the complacent answer. 'I should take him to be the sort of man who can look after himself; but if he wants any kind of help—well, here I am; I won't go back on a man who is acting on my advice. Why, if he were to come out to Chicago—'

'Oh, no, not Chicago, pappa,' she said, somewhat earnestly, 'not to Chicago. I am sure he will be more at home—he will be happier—in his own country.'

She looked around once more; and then she stepped into the waggonette.

'He might have come to see me off,' she said, a little proudly. 'Good-bye, pappa, dear—I will send you a telegram as soon as I get to Paris.'

The two horses sprang forward; Miss Carry waved her lily hand; and then set to work to make herself comfortable with wraps and rugs, for the morning was chill. She thought it was very unfriendly of Ronald not to have come to say good-bye. And what was the reason of it? Of course he could know nothing of the nonsense she had written to her friend in Chicago.

'Have you not seen Ronald about anywhere?' she asked of the driver.

'No, mem,' answered that exceedingly shy youth, 'he wass not about all the morning. But I heard the crack of a gun; maybe he wass on the hill.'

And presently he said—

'I'm thinking that's him along the road—it's two of his dogs whatever.'

And indeed this did turn out to be Ronald who was coming

striding along the road, with his gun over his shoulder, a brace of setters at his heels, and something dangling from his left hand. The driver pulled up his horses.

'I've brought ye two or three golden plover to take with ye, Miss Hudson,' Ronald said—and he handed up the birds.

Well, she was exceedingly pleased to find that he had not neglected her, nay, that he had been especially thinking of her and her departure. But what should she do with these birds in a hotel?

'It's so kind of you,' she said, 'but really I'm afraid they're—would you not rather give them to my father?'

'Ye must not go away empty-handed,' said he, with good-humoured insistence; and then it swiftly occurred to her that perhaps this was some custom of the neighbourhood; and so she accepted the little parting gift with a very pretty speech of thanks.

He raised his cap, and was going on.

'Ronald,' she called, and he turned.

'I wish you would tell me,' she said—and there was a little touch of colour in the pretty, pale, interesting face—'if there is anything I could bring from London that would help you—I mean books about chemistry—or—or—about trees—or instruments for land-surveying—I am sure I could get them—'

He laughed, in a doubtful kind of way.

'I'm obliged to ye,' he said, 'but it's too soon to speak about that. I havena made up my mind yet.'

'Not yet?'

'No.'

'But you will?'

He said nothing.

'Good-bye, then.'

She held out her hand; so that he could not refuse to take it. So they parted; and the horses' hoofs rang again in the silence of the valley; and she sat looking after the disappearing figure and the meekly following dogs. And then, in the distance, she thought she could make out some faint sound: was he singing to himself as he strode along towards the little hamlet?

'At all events,' she said to herself, with just a touch of pique, 'he does not seem much downhearted at my going away.' And little indeed did she imagine that this song he was thus carelessly and unthinkingly singing was all about Meenie, and red and

white roses, and trifles light and joyous as the summer air. For not yet had black care got a grip of his heart.

But this departure of Miss Carry for the south now gave him leisure to attend to his own affairs and proper duties, which had suffered somewhat from his attendance in the cobble; and it was not until all these were put straight that he addressed himself to the serious consideration of the ambitious and daring project that had been placed before him. Hitherto it had been pretty much of an idle speculation—a dream, in short, that looked very charming and fascinating as the black-eyed young lady from over the seas sat in the stern of the boat and chatted through the idle hours. Her imagination did not stay to regard the immediate and practical difficulties and risks; all these seemed already surmounted; Ronald had assumed the position to which he was entitled by his abilities and personal character; she only wondered which part of Scotland he would be living in when next her father and herself visited Europe; and whether they might induce him to go over with them for a while to the States. But when Ronald himself, in cold blood, came to consider ways and means, there was no such plain and easy sailing. Not that he hesitated about cutting himself adrift from his present moorings; he had plenty of confidence in himself, and knew that he could always earn a living with his ten fingers, whatever happened. Then he had between 80*l.* and 90*l.*—lodged in a savings bank in Inverness; and out of that he could pay for any classes he might have to attend, or perhaps offer a modest premium if he wished to get into a surveyor's office for a short time. But there were so many things to think of. What should he do about Maggie, for example? Then Lord Ailene had always been a good master to him; would it not seem ungrateful that he should throw up his situation without apparent reason? And so forth, and so forth, through cogitations long and anxious; and many a half-hour on the hill-side and many a half-hour by the slumbering peat-fire was given to this great project; but always there was one side of the question that he shut out from his mind. For how could he admit to himself that this lingering hesitation—this dread, almost, of what lay await for him in the future—had anything to do with the going away from Meenie, and the leaving behind him, and perhaps for ever, the hills and streams and lonely glens that were all steeped in the magic and witchery of her presence? Was it not time to be done with idle fancies? And if, in the great city—in Edinburgh or Glasgow, as the case might be—he should fall

to thinking of Ben Loyal, and Bonnie Strath Naver; and the long, long days on Clebrig; and Meenie coming home in the evening from her wanderings by Mudal Water, with a few wild-flowers, perhaps, or a bit of white heather, but always with her beautiful blue-grey Highland eyes so full of kindness as she stopped for a few minutes' friendly chatting—well, that would be a pretty picture to look back upon, all lambent and clear in the tender colours that memory loves to use. A silent picture, of course: there would be no sound of the summer rills, nor the sweeter sound of Meenie's voice; but not a sad picture; only remote and ethereal, as if the years had come between, and made everything distant and pale and dreamlike.

The first definite thing that he did was to write to his brother in Glasgow, acquainting him with his plans, and begging him to obtain some further particulars about the Highland and Agricultural Society's certificates. The answer that came back from Glasgow was most encouraging; for the Rev. Alexander Strang, though outwardly a heavy and lethargic man, had a shrewd head enough, and was an enterprising, shifty person, not a little proud of the position that he had won for himself, and rather inclined to conceal from his circle of friends—who were mostly members of his congregation—the fact that his brother was merely a game-keeper in the Highlands. Nay, more, he was willing to assist; he would take Maggie into his house, so that there might be no difficulty in that direction; and in the meantime he would see what were the best class-books on the subjects named, so that Ronald might be working away at them in these comparatively idle spring and summer months, and need not give up his situation prematurely. There was even some hint thrown out that perhaps Ronald might board with his brother; but this was not pressed; for the fact was that Mrs. Alexander was a severely rigid disciplinarian, and on the few occasions on which Ronald had been their guest she had given both brothers to understand that the frivolous gaiety of Ronald's talk, and the independence of his manners, and his Gallio-like indifference about the fierce schisms and heartburnings in the Scotch Church were not, in her opinion, in consonance with the atmosphere that ought to prevail in a Free Church minister's house. But on the whole the letter was very friendly and hopeful; and Ronald was enjoined to let his brother know when his decision should be finally taken, and in what way assistance could be rendered him.

One night the little Maggie stole away through the dark to

the doctor's cottage. There was a light in the window of Meenie's room; she could hear the sound of the piano; no doubt Meenie was practising and alone; and on such occasions a visit from Maggie was but little interruption. And so the smaller girl went boldly towards the house, and gained admission, and was proceeding upstairs without any ceremony, when the sudden cessation of the music caused her to stop. And then she heard a very simple and pathetic air begin—just touched here and there with a few chords: and was Meenie, tired with the hard work of the practising, allowing herself this little bit of quiet relaxation? She was singing, too—though so gently that Maggie could scarcely make out the words. But she knew the song—had not Meenie sung it many a time before to her?—and who but Meenie could put such tenderness and pathos into the simple air? She had almost to imagine the words—so gentle was the voice that went with those lightly-touched chords:

*'The sun rose sae rosy, the gray hills adorning,
Light sprang the laverock, and mounted on hie,
When true to the tryst o' blythe May's dewy morning,
Jeanie cam' linking out owre the green lea.
To mark her impatience I crap 'mong the breckans,
Aft, aft to the kent gate she turned her black e'e;
Then lying down dowilie, sighed, by the willow tree,
"I am asleep, do not waken me."'*¹

Then there was silence. The little Maggie waited; for this song was a great favourite with Ronald, who himself sometimes attempted it; and she would be able to tell him when she got home that she had heard Meenie sing it—and he always listened with interest to anything, even the smallest particulars, she could tell him about Meenie and about what she had done or said. But where were the other verses? She waited and listened; the silence was unbroken. And so she tapped lightly at the door, and entered.

And then something strange happened. For when Maggie shut the door behind her and went forward, Meenie did not at once turn her head to see who this was, but had hastily whipped out her handkerchief and passed it over her eyes. And when she did turn, it was with a kind of look of bravery—as if to dare any one to say that she had been crying—though there were traces of tears on her cheeks.

¹ *'I am asleep, do not waken me'* is the English equivalent of the Gaelic name of the air, which is a very old one, and equally pathetic in its Irish and Highland versions.

'Is it you, Maggie? I am glad to see you,' she managed to say.

The younger girl was rather frightened and sorely concerned as well.

'But what is it, Meenie, dear?' she said, going and taking her hand. 'Are you in trouble?'

'No, no,' her friend said, with an effort to appear quite cheerful, 'I was thinking of many things—I scarcely know what. And now take off your things, and sit down, Maggie, and tell me all about this great news. It was only this afternoon that my father learnt that you and your brother were going away; and he would not believe it at first, till he saw Ronald himself. And it is true, after all? Dear me, what a change there will be!'

She spoke quite in her usual manner now; and her lips were no longer trembling, but smiling; and the Highland eyes were clear, and as full of kindness as ever.

'But it is a long way off, Meenie,' the smaller girl began to explain quickly, when she had taken her seat by the fire, 'and Ronald is so anxious to please everybody, and—and that is why I came along to ask you what you think best.'

'I?' said Meenie, with a sudden slight touch of reserve.

'It'll no be a nice thing going away among strange folk,' said her companion, 'but I'll no grumble if it's to do Ronald good; and even among strange folk—well, I don't care as long as I have Ronald and you, Meenie. And it's to Glasgow, and not to Edinburgh, he thinks he'll have to go; and then you will be in Glasgow too; so I do not mind anything else. It will not be so lonely for any of us; and we can spend the evenings together—oh, no, it will not be lonely at all—'

'But, Maggie,' the elder girl said, gravely, 'I am not going to Glasgow.'

Her companion looked up quickly, with frightened eyes.

'But you said you were going, Meenie!'

'Oh, no,' the other said, gently. 'My mother has often talked of it—and I suppose I may have to go some time; but my father is against it; and I know I am not going at present, any way.'

'And you are staying here—and—and Ronald and me—we will be by ourselves in Glasgow!' the other exclaimed, as if this prospect were too terrible to be quite comprehended as yet.

'But if it is needful he should go?' Meenie said. 'People have often to part from their friends like that.'

'Yes, and it's no much matter when they have plenty of

friends,' said the smaller girl, with her eyes becoming moist, 'but, Meenie, I havena got one but you.'

'Oh, no, you must not say that,' her friend remonstrated. 'Why, there is your brother in Glasgow, and his family; I am sure they will be kind to you. And Ronald will make plenty of friends wherever he goes—you can see that for yourself; and do you think you will be lonely in a great town like Glasgow? It is the very place to make friends, and plenty of them—'

'Oh, I don't know what to do—I don't know what to do, if you are not going to Glasgow, Meenie!' she broke in. 'I wonder if it was that that Ronald meant. He asked me whether I would like to stay here, or go with him; for Mrs. Murray has offered to take me in, and I would have to help at keeping the books, and that is very kind of them, I'm sure, for I did not think I could be of any use to anybody. And you are to be here in Inver-Mudal—and Ronald away in Glasgow—'

Well, it was a bewildering thing. These were the two people she cared for most of all in the world; and virtually she was called upon to choose between them. And if she had a greater loyalty and reverence towards her brother, still, Meenie was her sole girl-friend, and monitress, and counsellor. What would her tasks be without Meenie's approval; how could she get on with her knitting and sewing without Meenie's aid; what would the days be like without the witchery of Meenie's companionship—even if that were limited to a passing word or a smile? Ronald had not sought to influence her choice; indeed, the alternative had scarcely been considered; for she believed that Meenie was going to Glasgow also; and with her hero brother and her beautiful girl-friend both there, what more could she wish for in the world? But now—?

Well, Meenie, in her wise and kind way, strove to calm the anxiety of the girl; and her advice was altogether in favour of Maggie's going to Glasgow with her brother Ronald, if that were equally convenient to him, and of no greater expense than her remaining in Inver-Mudal with Mrs. Murray.

'For you know he wants somebody to look after him,' Meenie continued, with her eyes rather averted, 'and if it does not matter so much here about his carelessness of being wet and cold, because he has plenty of health and exercise, it will be very different in Glasgow, where there should be some one to bid him be more careful.'

'But he pays no heed to me,' the little sister sighed, 'unless

I can tell him you have been saying so-and-so—then he listens. He is very strange. He has never once worn the blue jersey that I knitted for him. He asked me a lot of questions about how it was begun; and I told him as little as I could about the help you had given me,' she continued, evasively, 'and when the snow came on, I thought he would wear it; but no—he put it away in the drawer with his best clothes, and it's lying there all neatly folded up—and what is the use of that? If you were going to Glasgow, Meenie, it would be quite different. It will be very lonely there.'

'Lonely!' the other exclaimed. 'With your brother Ronald, and your other brother's family, and all their friends. And then you will be able to go to school and have more regular teaching—Ronald spoke once or twice to me about that.'

'Yes, indeed,' the little Maggie said; but the prospect did not cheer her much; and for some minutes they both sate silent, she staring into the fire. And then she said bitterly—

'I wish the American people had never come here. It is all their doing. It never would have come into Ronald's head to leave Inver-Mudal but for them. And where else will he be so well known—and—and everyone speaking well of him—and everyone so friendly—'

'But, Maggie, these things are always happening,' her companion remonstrated. 'Look at the changes my father has had to make. And Ronald is young; and if there is a better opening before him, why should he not take it? Indeed you will have to be more cheerful about it, and do your best to help; Ronald will have enough trouble without seeing you downhearted and sorry to leave.'

'If you were going, I would not care, Meenie,' said she, wistfully.

'But you must put that out of your head, and think of what is best for your brother. Indeed you should be glad that he has a good chance before him. It is the people who are left behind—in so small a place as this is—who will find it more lonely than before.'

'And I wonder if we are never to come back to Inver-Mudal, Meenie?' the girl said, suddenly, with appealing eyes.

Meenie tried to laugh; and said—

'Who can tell? It is the way of the world for people to come and go. And Glasgow is a big place—perhaps you would not care to come back after having made plenty of friends there.'

'My friends will always be here, and nowhere else,' the smaller girl said, with emphasis. 'Oh, Meenie, do you think if Ronald were to get on well and make more money than he has now, he would come back here, and bring me too, for a week maybe, just to see everyone again?'

'I cannot tell you that, Maggie,' the elder girl said, rather absently.

After this their discussion of the strange and unknown future that lay before them languished somehow; for Meenie seemed preoccupied, and scarcely as blithe and hopeful as she had striven to appear. But when Maggie rose to return home—saying that it was time for her to be looking after Ronald's supper—her friend seemed to pull herself together somewhat, and at once and cheerfully accepted Maggie's invitation to come and have tea with her the following afternoon.

'For you have been so little in to see us lately,' the small Maggie said; 'and Ronald always engaged with the American people—and often in the evening too as well as the whole day long.'

'But I must make a great deal of you now that you are going away,' said Miss Douglas, smiling.

'And Ronald—will I ask him to stay in till you come?'

But here there was some hesitation.

'Oh, no, I would not do that—no doubt he is busy just now with his preparations for going away. I would not say anything to him—you and I will have tea together by ourselves.'

The smaller girl looked up timidly.

'Ronald is going away too, Meenie.'

Perhaps there was a touch of reproach in the tone; at all events, Meenie said—after a moment's embarrassment—

'Of course I should be very glad if he happened to be in the house—and—and had the time to spare; but I think he will understand that, Maggie, without your saying as much to him.'

'He gave plenty of his time to the American young lady,' said Maggie, rather proudly.

'But I thought you and she were great friends,' Meenie said, in some surprise.

'It takes a longer time than that to make friends,' the girl said—and by and by she left.

Then Meenie went up to her room again, and sate down in front of the dull-smouldering peat-fire, with its heavy lumps of shadow, and its keen edges of crimson, and its occasional flare of flame and shower of sparks. There were many pictures there—

of distant things; of the coming spring-time, with all the new wonder and gladness somehow gone out of it; and of the long long shining summer days, and Inver-Mudal grown lonely; and of the busy autumn-time, with the English people come from the south, and no Ronald there, to manage everything for them. For her heart was very affectionate; and she had but few friends; and Glasgow was a great distance away. There were some other fancies, too—and self-questionings and perhaps even self-reproaches—that need not be mentioned here. When, by and by, she rose and went to the piano, which was still open, it was not to resume her seat. She stood absently staring at the keys—for these strange pictures followed her; and indeed that one half-unconscious trial of '*I am asleep, do not waken me*' had been quite enough for her, in her present mood.

CHAPTER XX.

'AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS.'

YES; it soon became clear that Meenie Douglas, in view of this forthcoming departure, had resolved to forego something of the too obvious reserve she had recently imposed on herself—if, indeed, that maidenly shrinking and shyness had not been rather a matter of instinct than of will. When Ronald came home on the following evening, she was seated with Maggie in the old familiar way at a table plentifully littered with books, patterns, and knitting; and when she shook hands with him, her timidly uplifted eyes had much of the old friendliness in them, and her smile of welcome was pleasant to see. It was he who was shy, and backward, and very respectful. For if her mother had enjoined her to be a little more distant in manner towards this one or the other of those around her—well, that was quite intelligible; that was quite right; and he could not complain; but on the other hand, if the girl herself, in this very small domestic circle, seemed rather anxious to put aside those barriers which were necessary out-of-doors, he would not presume on her good-nature. And yet—and yet—he could not help thawing a little; for she was very kind, and even merry withal; and her eyes were like the eyes of the Meenie of old.

'I am sure Maggie will be glad to get away from Inver-Mudal,' she was saying, 'for she will not find anywhere a schoolmistress

as hard as I have been. But maybe she will not have to go to school at all, if she has to keep house for you ?’

‘But she’ll no have to keep house for me,’ Ronald said, at once. ‘If she goes to Glasgow, she’ll be much better with my brother’s family—for that will be a home for her.’

‘And where will you go, Ronald ?’ she said.

‘Oh, into a lodging—I can fend for myself.’

At this she looked grave—nay, she did not care to conceal her disapproval. For had she not been instructing Maggie in the mysteries of housekeeping in a town—as far as these were known to herself: and had not the little girl showed great courage; and declared there was nothing she would not attempt rather than be separated from her brother Ronald ?

‘It would never do,’ said he, ‘to leave the lass alone in the house all day, in a big town. It’s very well here, where she has neighbours and people to look after her from time to time; but among strangers—’

‘I wouldna care a bit for that, Ronald,’ his sister said, promptly. ‘I would rather be with you, even if I was to be alone all the day, than living in Alexander’s house—’

‘We’ll see what’s best for ye when the time comes, lass,’ said he. ‘Dinna bother your head just yet.’

Then he looked at the table.

‘But where’s the tea ye said ye would ask Miss Douglas in to?’

‘We were so busy with the Glasgow housekeeping,’ Meenie said, laughing, ‘that we forgot all about it.’

‘I’ll go and get it ready now,’ the little Maggie said, and she went from the room—leaving these two alone.

He was a little embarrassed; and she was also. There had been no *amantium iræ* of any kind; but all the same the *redintegratio amoris* was just a trifle difficult; for she on her side was anxious to have their old relations re-established during the brief period that would elapse ere he left the neighbourhood, and yet she was hesitating and a trifle embarrassed; while he on his side maintained a strictly respectful reserve. He ‘knew his place;’ his respect towards her was part of his own self-respect; and if it did not occur to him that it was rather hard upon Meenie that all the advances towards a complete rehabilitation of their friendship should come from her, that was because he did not know that she was moved by any such wish, and also because he was completely ignorant of a good deal else that had happened

of late. Of course, certain things were obvious enough. Clearly, the half-frightened, distant, and yet regretful look with which she had recently met and parted from him when by chance they passed each other in the road was no longer in her eyes; there was a kind of appeal for friendliness in her manner towards him; she seemed to say, 'Well, you are going away; don't let us forget the old terms on which we used to meet.' And not only did he quickly respond to that feeling, but also he was abundantly grateful to her; did not he wish to carry away with him the pleasantest memories of this beautiful, sweet-natured friend, who had made all the world magical to him for a while, who had shown him the grace and dignity and honour of true womanhood, and made him wonder no less at the charm of her clear-shining simplicity and naturalness? The very name of 'Love Meenie' would be as the scent of a rose—as the song of a lark—for him through all the long coming years.

'It will make a great change about here,' said she, with her eyes averted, 'your going away.'

'There's no one missed for long,' he answered, in his down-right fashion. 'Where people go, people come; the places get filled up.'

'Yes, but sometimes they are not quite the same,' said she, rather gently. She was thinking of the newcomer. Would he be the universal favourite that Ronald was—always good-natured and laughing, but managing everybody and everything; lending a hand at the sheep-shearing or playing the pipes at a wedding—anything to keep life moving along briskly; and always ready to give her father a day's hare-shooting or a turn at the pools of Mudal Water, when the spates began to clear? She knew quite well—for often had she heard it spoken of—that no one could get on as well as Ronald with the shepherds at the time of the heather-burning: when on the other moors the shepherds and keepers were growling and quarrelling like rival leashes of collies, on Lord Ailine's ground everything was peace and quietness and good humour. And then she had a vague impression that the next keeper would be merely a keeper; whereas Ronald was—Ronald.

'I'm sure I was half ashamed,' said he, 'when I got his lordship's letter. It was as fair an offer as one man could make to another; or rather, half a dozen offers; for he said he would raise my wage, if that was what was wrong; or he would let me have another lad to help me in the kennels; or, if I was tired of the

Highlands, he would get me a place at his shooting in the South. Well, I was sweirt to trouble his lordship with my small affairs; but after that I couldna but sit down and write to him the real reason of my leaving—'

'And I'm certain,' said she, quickly, 'that he will write back and offer you any help in his power.'

'No, no,' said he, with a kind of laugh, 'the one letter is enough—if it ever comes to be a question of a written character. But it's just real friendly and civil of him; and if I could win up here for a week or a fortnight in August, I would like well to lend them a hand and set them going; for it will be a good year for the grouse, I'm thinking—'

'Oh, will you be coming to see us in August?' she said, with her eyes suddenly and rather wistfully lighting up.

'Well, I don't know how I may be situated,' said he. 'And there's the railway expense—though I would not mind that much if I had the chance otherwise; for his lordship has been a good master to me; and I would just like to lend him a hand, and start the new man with the management of the dogs and the beats. That's one thing Lord Ailine will do for me, I hope; I hope he will let me have a word about the man that's coming in my place; I would not like to have a cantankerous ill-tempered brute of a fellow coming in to have charge of my dogs. They're the bonniest lot in Sutherlandshire.'

All this was practical enough; and meanwhile she had set to work to clear the table, to make way for Maggie. When the young handmaiden appeared with the tea-things, he left the room for a few minutes, and presently returned, with a polecat-skin, carefully dressed and smoothed, in his hand.

'Here's a bit thing,' said he, 'I wish ye would take, if it's of any use to you. Or if ye could tell me anything ye wished it made into, I could have that done when I go south. And if your mother would like one or two of the deer-skins, I'm sure she's welcome to them; they're useful about a house.'

'Indeed, you are very kind, Ronald,' said she, flushing somewhat, 'and too kind, indeed—for you know that ever since we have known you, all these kindnesses have always been on one side—and—and—we have never had a chance of doing anything in return for you—'

'Oh, nonsense,' said he, good-naturedly. 'Well, there is one thing your father could do for me—if he would take my gun, and my rifle, and rods and reels, and just keep them in good working

order, that would be better than taking them to Glasgow and getting them spoiled with rust and want of use. I don't want to part with them altogether; for they're old friends; and I would like to have them left in safe keeping—'

She laughed lightly.

'And that is your way of asking a favour—to offer my father the loan of all these things. Well, I am sure he will be very glad to take charge of them—'

'And to use them,' said he, 'to use them; for that is the sure way of keeping them in order.'

'But perhaps the new keeper may not be so friendly?'

'Oh, I will take care about that,' said he confidently; 'and in any case you know it was his lordship said your father might have a day on the Mudal Water whenever he liked. And what do you think, now, about the little skin there?'

'I think I will keep it as it is—just as you have given it to me,' she said, simply.

In due course they had tea together; but that afternoon or evening meal is a substantial affair in the north—cold beef, ham, scones, oat-meal cake, marmalade, jam, and similar things all making their appearance—and one not to be lightly hurried over. And Meenie was so much at home now; and there was so much to talk over; and she was so hopeful. Of course, Ronald must have holiday-times, like other people; and where would he spend these, if he did not come back to his old friends? And he would have such chances as no mere stranger could have, coming through on the mail-cart and asking everywhere for a little trout-fishing. Ronald would have a day or two's stalking from Lord Ailine; and there was the loch; and Mudal Water; and if the gentlemen were after the grouse, would they not be glad to have an extra gun on the hill for a day or two, just to make up a bag for them?

'And then,' said Meenie, with a smile, 'who knows but that Ronald may in time be able to have a shooting of his own? Stranger things have happened.'

'It would be little use to me when I got it,' said he, laughing. 'That's the worst of it. If you're born to money that's all very well, and you get trained to the shooting; but if ye make your own money, by the time ye've made it, ye canna face the hill-side—ye canna walk. That is what I have observed, at least; and it's a mercy for the old gentlemen that in any case they can sit in a poble and troll for salmon.'

'Yes, when the American girl caught five in one day!' said Maggie.

'But she has nerve, that one,' he maintained. 'She never made a mistake; she never lost her head once. And I've seen women-folk jump and shriek as if they were demented when they pulled up a whiting half-a-dozen inches long.'

'I wish they had never come to Inver-Mudal,' said Maggie, half to herself.

When tea was over and the things removed, he lit his pipe, and the girls took to their knitting. And never, he thought, had Meenie looked so pretty, and pleased, and quickly responsive with her clear and happy eyes. He forgot all about Mrs. Douglas's forecast as to the future estate of her daughter; he forgot all about the Stuarts of Glengask and Orosay; this was the Meenie whom Mudal knew, whom Clebrig had charge of, who was the friend and companion of the birds and the wild-flowers and the summer streams. What a wonderful thing it was to see her small fingers so deftly at work; when she looked up, the room seemed full of light and entrancement; her sweet low laugh found an echo in the very core of his heart. And they all of them, for this one happy evening, seemed to forget that soon there was to be an end. They were together; the world shut out; the old harmony re-established, or nearly re-established; and Meenie was listening to his reading of 'The Eve of St. Agnes'—in the breathless hush of the little room—or she was praying, and in vain, for him to bring his pipes and play 'Lord Lovat's Lament,' or they were merely idly chatting and laughing, while the busy work of the fingers went on. And sometimes he sate quite silent, listening to the other two; and her voice seemed to fill the room with music; and he wondered whether he could carry away in his memory some accurate recollection of the peculiar, soft, rich tone, that made the simplest things sound valuable. It was a happy evening.

But when she rose to go away, she grew graver; and as she and Ronald went along the road together—it was very dark, though there were a few stars visible here and there—she said to him, in rather a low voice—

'Well, Ronald, the parting between friends is not very pleasant; but I am sure I hope it will all be for the best, now that you have made up your mind to it. And everyone seems to think you will do well.'

'Oh, as for that,' said he, 'that is all right. If the worst comes to the worst, there is always the Black Watch.'

‘What do you mean?’

‘Well, they’re always sending the Forty-second into the thick of it, no matter what part of the world the fighting is, so that a man has a good chance. I suppose I’m not too old to get enlisted; sometimes I wish I had thought of it when I was a lad—I don’t know that I would like anything better than to be a sergeant in the Black Watch. And I’m sure I would serve three years for no pay at all if I could only get one single chance of winning the V.C. But it comes to few; it’s like the big stag—it’s there when ye least expect it; and a man’s hand is not just always ready, and steady. But I’m sure ye needna bother about what’s going to happen to me—that’s of small account.’

‘It is of very great account to your friends, at all events,’ said she valiantly, ‘and you must not forget, when you are far enough away from here, that you have friends here who are thinking of you and always wishing you well. It will be easy for you to forget; you will have all kinds of things to do, and many people around you; but the others here may often think of you, and wish to hear from you. It is the one that goes away that has the best of it, I think—among the excitement of meeting strange scenes and strange faces—’

‘But I am not likely to forget,’ said he, rather peremptorily; and they walked on in silence.

Presently she said—

‘I have a little album that I wish you would write something in, before you go away altogether.’

‘Oh, yes, I will do that,’ said he, ‘and gladly.’

‘But I mean something of your own,’ she said, rather more timidly.

‘Why, but who told you—’

‘Oh, everyone knows, surely!’ said she. ‘And why should you conceal it? There were the verses that you wrote about Mrs. Semple’s little girl—I saw them when I was at Tongue last—and indeed I think they are quite beautiful: will you write out a copy of them in my album?’

‘Or something else, perhaps,’ said he—for instantly it flashed upon him that it was something better than a mere copy that was needed for Meenie’s book. Here, indeed, was a chance. If there was any inspiration to be gained from these wild hills and straths and lonely lakes, now was the time for them to be propitious; would not Clebrig—the giant Clebrig—whose very child Meenie was—come to his aid, that so he might present to her some

fragment of song or rhyme not unworthy to be added to her little treasury?

‘I will send for the book to-morrow,’ said he.

‘I hope it will not give you too much trouble,’ said she, as they reached the small gate, ‘but it is very pleasant to turn over the leaves, and see the actual writing of your friends, and think of when you last saw them and where they are now. And that seems to be the way with most of our friends; I suppose it is because we have moved about so; but there is scarcely anyone left—and if it was not for a letter occasionally, or a dip into that album, I should think we were almost alone in the world. Well, good-night, Ronald—or will you come in and have a chat with my father?’

‘I am afraid it is rather late,’ he said.

‘Well, good-night.’

‘Good-night, Miss Douglas,’ said he; and then he walked slowly back to his home.

And indeed he was in no mood to turn to the scientific volumes that had already arrived from Glasgow. His heart was all afire because of the renewal of Meenie’s kindness; and the sound of her voice was still in his ears; and quite naturally he took out that blotting-pad full of songs and fragments of songs, to glance over them here and there, and see if amongst them was any one likely to recall to him when he was far away from Inver-Mudal the subtle mystery and charm of her manner and look. And then he began to think what a stranger coming to Inver-Mudal would see in Meenie? Perhaps only the obvious things—the pretty oval of the cheek and chin, the beautiful, proud mouth, the wide-apart, contemplative eyes? And perhaps these would be sufficient to attract? He began to laugh with scorn at this stranger—who could only see these obvious things—who knew nothing about Meenie, and the sweetness of her ways, and the frank courage and honour of her mind. And what if she were to turn coquette, under the influence of this alien admiration? Or perhaps become sharply proud? Well, he set to work—out of a kind of whimsicality—and in time had scribbled out this

FLOWER AUCTION.

Who will buy pansies?

There are her eyes,

Dew-soft and tender,

Love in them lies,

*Who will buy roses ?
There are her lips,
And there is the nectar
That Cupidon sips.*

*Who will buy lilies ?
There are her cheeks,
And there the shy blushing
That maidhood bespeaks.*

*' Meenie, Love Meenie,
What must one pay ?'
' Good stranger, the market's
Not open to-day !'*

He looked at the verses again and again ; and the longer he looked at them the less he liked them—he scarcely knew why. Perhaps they were a little too literary ? They seemed to lack naturalness and simplicity ; at all events, they were not true to Meenie ; why should Meenie figure as a flippant coquette ? And so he threw them away ; and turned to his books—not the scientific ones—to hunt out something that was like Meenie. He came near it in Tannahill, but was not quite satisfied. A verse or two in Keats held his fancy for a moment. But at last he found what he wanted in Wordsworth.

*' A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye ;
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.'*

Yes ; that was liker Meenie—who 'dwelt among the untrodden ways.'

(To be continued.)

The Upper Air.

THE greatest difficulty which meets every thoughtful weather student is his inability to obtain any satisfactory account of the condition and motions of the upper portion of the atmosphere. As has been said, 'we live at the bottom of the atmospheric ocean, of which the upper layers are practically inaccessible to us.'

The air is arranged symmetrically about the globe, and it is much denser close to the earth than above it. The actual height to which the air extends is not known exactly, but at the level of about forty miles it is no longer dense enough to be capable of refracting the sun's rays. At the height of about seven miles, or 37,000 feet, believed to have been reached by Messrs. Glaisher and Coxwell, in a famous balloon ascent from Wolverhampton, September 5, 1862, the air was found to be so rarefied that great difficulty was experienced in breathing.

Such a height as seven miles is quite insignificant when compared with the diameter of the earth. In fact, if the earth were represented by a 24-inch globe, the height of the atmosphere, even supposing it to be ten miles, would be represented by a shell four hundredths of an inch thick, about the thickness of a shilling.

We do not, however, possess regular and continuous observations from a level higher than about one-third of seven miles, for Pike's Peak, in Colorado, only attains the height of 13,960 feet, and the city of Leh, in Ladakh, of 11,500 feet, and Quito of 9,540 feet, while the observations from the last-named locality are rather scanty and cannot be used much. Now, a moment's reflection will show that, as clouds have been observed to float at an altitude of 20,000 feet and upwards, observations taken close to the ground cannot give us sufficient knowledge of the conditions of the atmosphere as a whole, and accordingly great interest attaches to the endeavours which are, from time to time, made to gain some accurate intelligence of what is going on at and above the level of the clouds.

These attempts are made in three directions. Firstly, there are balloon ascents; secondly, mountain stations; and thirdly, observations on the upper clouds taken at ordinary stations.

The balloon ascents which have been incontestably the most fruitful in scientific results have been those which were conducted by Mr. John Welsh in 1852, and by Mr. Glaisher between the years 1862 and 1870. Since that date the ascents have been numerous enough, especially of late years, but as a rule scientific study has not been the chief care of the aeronauts. However, even if it were so, the mode of observation can never be thoroughly satisfactory. The ascents can practically only take place at times of nearly perfect calm, for once the balloon rises its motion is generally much more rapid than the rate of the wind below would lead an inexperienced observer to anticipate. Consequently the inmates of the car can never be quite sure, if they ascend in a breeze, when, where, or how they may be able to reach *terra firma* again, and we possess no observations at all made during a high wind. The newspapers announce that in the United States ascents are about to be made at the centres of storms, but this idea has not yet been carried out! In fact, there are few scientific men who are willing to run the risks of an ascent, and who can preserve the necessary repose of mind to take careful observations during the voyage, especially at the time of descent.

The actual instruments employed must be of special construction, and the thermometers peculiarly sensitive, for the balloon when rising or sinking passes through atmospheric strata of very different temperatures so rapidly, that the thermometers used in ordinary observations are not sufficiently delicate to indicate the successive changes.

I have spoken of the time of descent. This is always an anxious moment, for the balloon frequently bumps about after a very undignified fashion, especially if the grappling irons fail to take firm hold at first, so that not only the instruments but the very occupants of the car are not unlikely to meet with some rough usage.

It will therefore be understood that the records obtained by means of balloons are few and far between, and that if any facts of importance come to light it is not easy to repeat the ascent at once in order to confirm or correct first impressions.

As to captive balloons, the heights attainable with them are never considerable, and a very moderate amount of wind is sufficient to render the ascent impracticable, as no ordinary cable, light enough to be carried up, is strong enough to bear the strain of a large balloon acted on by a strong breeze.

One experience which has been made by almost all aeronauts

is that before they reach the level of 1,000 feet they find that the wind has changed, that the upper current is not precisely in the same direction as the surface wind; and, in fact, in very lofty ascents, the balloon may pass through several different currents of air, differing from each other in direction and rate, as well as in temperature, and in dampness or dryness. It is by utilising these currents that balloonists have proposed to make voyages from one definite spot to another, but these proposals have never been extensively carried into effect.

With all the disadvantages attached to their use, it is undeniable that balloons have afforded us valuable information as to the distribution of temperature above our heads, and Glaisher's results for this give a rate of decrease of temperature of 1° Fahrenheit in every 269 feet up to the level of 2,000 feet. This, however, is not a uniform rate of decrease, as the following brief notes of an ascent in ordinary autumn weather will show the irregularity of temperature distribution occasionally to be met with.

The ascent was commenced at 4.15 P.M. on September 5, 1881, the temperature on the ground being about 60° Fahr. By 4.41 the height reached was 12,500 feet, and the temperature having fallen to 0° Fahr., the valve of the balloon became frozen up, and had to be freed by Captain Templer, who climbed out of the car to do so. The balloon ascended further, and by 5, when the aeronauts heard 'Big Ben strike very plainly,' though the earth was invisible owing to a cloud layer far below, the height reached was estimated at 13,800 feet, and the thermometer had *risen* to 28° Fahr. From 5.8 to 5.16 Captain Templer was ill through inhaling gas, and his companion could take no notes, being occupied with the invalid. The balloon meanwhile ascended to its maximum elevation and then came down. At 5.25 it had approached the layer of cloud passed through on starting, and the remark is made, 'The air feels as if it were getting much colder,' being really much damper. At about 6 the balloon reached the ground, but the report is not precise as to this part of the performance, for the descent was rough and several instruments were broken.

The oscillations of temperature met with are sometimes much more abrupt and extensive. In a famous ascent made in Paris, in 1850, by Messrs. Barral and Bixio, most remarkable results were recorded. The balloon entered a cloud at a height of about 7,000 feet, and continued enveloped in cloud up to the highest

level reached, that of about 21,000 feet. At the height of 19,000 feet the temperature was 15° Fahr., and within the next 1,000 feet it fell fifty-four degrees, to -39° Fahr., and the mercury in the instruments froze. Such an enormous depression of temperature was quite unprecedented, for on the former occasion of a scientific ascent by the famous Gay-Lussac the temperature recorded at the height of 23,000 feet was 15° Fahr.

Again, it is not always the case that the air is found colder as we rise, for when ascents are made during severe frost it has been found that a temperature of, say, 60° Fahr. and pleasant weather have prevailed at the level of 5,000 feet or so, while at the surface of the ground the temperature was more than thirty degrees lower.

We shall see, later on, how this 'inversion of temperature,' as the French call it, is brought about, and how it explains some of the most remarkable peculiarities of Alpine weather. It is well known in the Alps that the hardest frosts are much less severe on the hill tops than below, and in Styria there is even the saying—

Steigt man im Winter um ein Stock
So wird es wärmer um ein Rock.

[If in winter you mount up a story higher
You find it a great-coat warmer.]

I have said that wind is one of the great difficulties to contend with in ballooning, and at the meeting of the British Association at Montreal last September, Professor Archibald gave an account of experiments which he is conducting by means of kites. He makes his kites carry up instruments, and as they require wind to sustain them, it is evident that they can yield results under the very circumstances of a fresh breeze which render the use of a balloon difficult. Inasmuch, however, as the lifting power of a kite is not great, the instruments attached to one must be of the lightest possible construction, and the observations must be self-recorded.

Observations on mountains have long been talked about. In 1845 a young scientific man named Aquirre kept up hourly observations for twelve months on Antisana, in the Andes, at the height of 13,000 feet, and for a similar length of time, in 1865-6, M. Dollfus-Ausset had observations kept up on the Col St. Théodule, near Zermatt, at the level of about 11,000 feet. Regular observations have been maintained for years at the Hospice of the Great St. Bernard, 8,136 feet, but that is not a

mountain peak, and it is only of late years that stations situated actually on peaks have been established generally.

The American Signal Office may be said to have led the way with their station on Mount Washington, 6,000 feet, soon followed by one on Pike's Peak at an altitude of 14,000 feet. In Europe almost the first such station was that established by General Nansouti on the Pic du Midi in the Pyrenees (9,000 feet), and the Puy de Dôme in Auvergne, 6,000 feet, was soon after occupied as a point of observation. In the Austrian Alps there have been several stations at very high levels, but none of these are in activity at the present time. In Switzerland, however, quite recently a station has been established on the Säntis, an isolated peak, 8,000 feet high, in the Canton of Appenzell.

In Italy, Germany, and Portugal there are also such stations. In England there is as yet none, but in Scotland the Scottish Meteorological Society has succeeded in building and maintaining an observatory on the summit of Ben Nevis (4,400 feet), the highest spot in the United Kingdom. The idea of occupying this vantage point had long been cherished, and the first essays to carry it out were made by an enthusiastic Australian, Mr. Clement L. Wragge, who in the summers of both 1881 and 1882 actually made a daily ascent, for the space of about five months, until stopped by the snow in autumn, and secured an observation on the summit at 9 A.M. each day. This daily trip was no child's play. A climb of 4,000 feet from Fort William, which is actually at the sea level, is a fair day's walk in fine weather; but when this had to be done, wet or fine, storm or calm, it required a rare degree of zeal for science, joined to indomitable perseverance and uninterrupted health, to have enabled Mr. Wragge to place on record an unbroken series of daily observations for so many months, even though in the second season he had the services of two assistants, who relieved him of some of the journeys. Mr. Wragge's own account of his trips gives a lively idea of his daily experiences. He says:—

‘One of the greatest difficulties I had to contend with in the Ben Nevis routine was as to the pony on which I rode to and from the lake, where it was left to graze and await my descent. Occasionally the stable boy overslept, and I had to make up for lost time—no easy matter, as the wretched track leads over deep ruts and treacherous swamps, and the poor brute had a trying time of it. Still more frequently the person to whom it belonged gave me rotten saddlery, in spite of all remonstrance;

and on commencing the ascent the girth would break, and I had to turn the animal adrift and plod on to the lake my fastest. This was decidedly hard, inasmuch as I was obliged to climb afoot some 2,500 feet from the town in less than two hours, by a circuitous route and over rough rock, stopping to observe at the other intermediate stations. Again, the pony often wandered in his hobbles, or, having broken the tethering rope, had made off to the moss; so also on the homeward journey I had sometimes to leave him, and run my hardest over ruts and through swamps by a short cut, to get my readings at the next station. Other trying parts of the work consisted in the journeys between Buchan's Well and the top in the allotted time, in having the two hours' exposure on the summit in bad weather, and in becoming chilled after profuse perspiration. The rude hut, with its walls full of holes of all shapes and angles, through which the wind whistles and the snowdrifts drive, afforded but a poor shelter from the drenching rain and cold, and it was impossible to keep anything dry. My hands often became so numbed and swollen, and my paper so saturated, that I had the utmost difficulty in handling keys, setting instruments, and entering my observations.'

The observers on Ben Nevis are no longer obliged to live at the foot and climb to the top of the mountain daily, for in the course of 1883 a permanent building was erected on the summit, and before Christmas of that year Mr. Omond and his assistants took up their abode therein, and commenced the task of regular observations. They also, like Mr. Wragge, met with difficulties in carrying on their work; we hear that on more than one occasion the observer, going out to read the instruments, had to be roped to avoid being blown over the edge of the crest.

In fact, mountain observations are always attended with risk. At the Pic du Midi, in the winter of 1883-4, three porters, carrying up stores to the station, were swept away by an avalanche and lost. The Americans also, at Pike's Peak, have their own experiences of difficulties and hardships to recount.

I now come to the use which can be made of these records. Many of the stations are provided with telegraphic communication with the world below, and in some few cases the telegrams are recognised to be of great service. For instance, the reports from the Pic du Midi can give timely intelligence of the approach of winter floods, as these arise from successive meltings of the snow on the upper slopes, owing to warm winds. In general,

however, these mountain telegraphic reports are not found to be of so much service as might be expected, for the exact relation between the weather on the mountain top and that below is not as yet thoroughly understood. It is, therefore, not easy to say at once what effect on the weather generally any changes which may be reported above may exert. To make our meaning clear we may take an example.

As a general rule, in fine weather, the wind is strongest about midday and weakest in the small hours of the morning. Now, on the mountain tops, the reverse is the case—the wind is strongest at midnight and the breeze dies down during the day-time. Accordingly a report of the breeze freshening as night comes on is the ordinary state of things during fine weather at high stations, whereas every yachtsman knows, at such a time he must expect the breeze to die away at the sea level. In how many regattas in summer does it not happen that the yachts are becalmed towards evening?

The same principles hold good in other particulars; and as to the barometrical readings, no use whatever has been made of them, or at least no one has yet pointed out in what way they are to be utilised. The oscillations above are far more sudden and extensive than those below, and it is impossible to reduce the readings to their equivalents at sea level, for the reason that we do not know from time to time the distribution of temperature in the vertical column of air corresponding to the difference of heights between the base and the summit.

I have mentioned the fact that the air, in severe frosts, is frequently warmer on the mountain tops than below. This arises in great measure from the fact that the cold air has a tendency to flow down the mountain sides and collect in the valleys below, and that its place on the summits is taken by air from still higher regions, which has not yet been chilled by contact with the ground, and is moreover actually warmed by the fact of its change of level. Air ascending has a tendency to become colder, owing to its expansion, and air descending to become warmer, owing to its compression.

This fact of low-lying bottoms being colder than uplands is well known to all gardeners, who find that the plants at the lowest parts of their grounds are the first to suffer from frost.

It would take me beyond the space at my disposal to proceed further with this interesting subject, but enough has been said to show that very many points have to be taken into consideration if

we wish to interpret telegraphic reports coming from high levels. We need not, therefore, be surprised to learn that meteorologists in all countries are more or less at a loss to know how, for the purposes of daily forecasting of weather, to deal with the information provided for them from mountain observatories.

The third and last mode of gaining information as to the upper air is by observation of the 'cirrus,' or 'mare's tail,' clouds, and this is a mode of observation which is open to everyone, as it does not require any instruments. It does, however, apparently require a special gift or knack of observing, which is practically incommunicable to ordinary people by teaching. The motions of these clouds are apparently very slow, owing to the enormous distance from the earth at which they float, and it is necessary to hold the head perfectly still and to watch the clouds as they slowly drift past some fixed object, like a tall chimney or the ridge of a roof. A convenient plan is to set up a pole, reaching a few feet above the level of the observer's eye, a mark being placed on the pole at the latter level. The summit of the pole should carry two rods placed crosswise, and set truly to the four cardinal points. The observer should, when opportunity offers, so station himself that some recognisable point of a cloud appears to move either vertically upwards from the top of the pole, or vertically downwards towards it. The direction of the pole from the observer's position, which may be judged of by the cross rods, is then, in the first instance, the direction of the upper current, in the second, its opposite. If the clouds be observed from a window, it is some assistance to have a few wires, some horizontal, others vertical, fastened across the window to the wall on the outside.

To those who are gifted with the necessary faculties, and with patience to make the observation, these 'cirrus' clouds give most useful indications of coming weather. It would lead me into too much technicality to enlarge further on this subject, but it may be a useful hint to anglers to say that one of the surest signs of the approach of a southerly storm and rain is the appearance of a bank of high cloud in the north-west, and the advance of these cirrus clouds, or streamers, from the same quarter.

Similar rules can be laid down for other developments and motions of these clouds, and they practically form the most useful and generally available source of information as to coming weather to those who know how to use them aright.

The general principle of upper cloud motion is that it indicates the directions in which the air flows out in the upper strata

from regions of low pressure (cyclonic depressions) to regions of high pressure.

The Rev. W. Clement Ley, who is the highest authority on all matters connected with these clouds, has published in vol. iii. of the 'Quarterly Journal of the Meteorological Society' a diagram, in which he shows by arrows how the upper and under currents are related to each other. The broad facts are these, that as in one of our ordinary winter storms, moving more or less from west to east, the wind in front is south or south-east, the upper clouds come from west or north-west. As these overrun the storm, they give early intimation of its approach.

In the rear of the storm, the direction of motion of the upper clouds coincides more nearly with that of the surface wind.

On the northern side of a depression, where the wind is easterly, the upper clouds move from south, and as this direction changes, it shows how the storm advances. The motion from west or north-west is the most serious, as the storms themselves usually advance from that quarter.

Other particulars as to the character of the upper clouds, whether they are in streaks, or as a network or web of interlacing fibres, must also be noted, and also the points of the horizon towards which the streamers, if prolonged, appear to converge.

Enough has been said in these few pages to point out the imperfection of our knowledge of the upper air, and the difficulties with which the study of its conditions is beset. To overcome in some measure these difficulties is one of the great tasks of meteorology in the future.

ROBERT H. SCOTT.

A Very Pretty Quarrel.

ONE lovely summer evening in the Highlands we were sitting, after dinner in the dim gloaming, on the stone steps that led up to the shooting-lodge. The moon was due, but, rising behind the big hill Corrie Mohr, was slow to put in her appearance. Yet a faint yellow glow stole over the sky as the minutes sped on, and the stars rather lost than gained lustre in the night. The rich fragrance of the purple heather came down from the moorland on the soft west wind, the subdued roar of the distant falls in the river smote pleasantly on the ear. Before us, in 'the park and policies,' a few dark pine-trees stood sharply outlined against the evening sky, the Lodge, a substantial stone building, rose at our back, and on all sides were the dim mysterious outlines of the mighty hills.

The cigars were undeniable, the soft murmurs of summer breezes and rushing waters were soothing to the tired senses of men who had been out on the hill all day under the August sun, and, truth to tell, we showed no unseemly haste to join the ladies indoors. But after a lengthened discussion on the weighty question whether a stag, killed that day, had twelve points, that entitled him to bear the dignified title of a 'Royal,' or only ten, seeing that two of his points were so retiringly inchoate—mere modest bulges on the surface of the horn—as scarcely to rank as points at all, conversation for a few moments showed signs of dying a natural death. But just before the indefinable sensation of an immediate movement eventuated in action, our entertainer began again, in the character of *raconteur*, to the two or three friends round him:

'I don't often tell a story against myself, and I don't suppose that I am wise in doing so now. But it is very pleasant sitting here out of doors, and I don't feel quite disposed to go in just yet. You remember, Lennox, that we met a man driving down the road to-night in a dogcart as we two came off the moor, and I told you that was the Honourable George Skene, owner of Strathaven, the next property to this. Now I'll go further and

tell you why I and the Honourable George are not quite as friendly as we used to be years ago, though, on my honour, the real row is between our keepers, and not between us.

‘In the old days we were devoted companions, doing everything together, and practically turning Strathaven and Glen Brayne into one property. We lost all reckoning of the exact “marches,” and no amateur boundary commissioners stood on the sky-line in solemn conclave over vexed questions of territory. At kirk of a Sunday it would be, “Hullo, Tomline! did you hear me shoot late last night just above your house? Well, I had followed a herd, with a heavy stag amongst them, all day without a shot, and I wasn’t for giving him up as long as daylight was granted me. Hang me, if I didn’t cut him off just at eight o’clock about one hundred and fifty yards above your washerwoman’s! Poor old brute! he had seen your party going in from the grouse, and thought he was perfectly safe on your home ground till next morning at any rate.”

‘Or else another day, “Skene, there are some snipe just now on that marshy bit beside the Cally burn. Bring some No. 7 cartridges along with you to-morrow morning, and we’ll make it unpleasant for them.” And very unpleasant the poor snipe used to have it made, for the Honourable George is a pretty shot. I never thought in those days that a rupture of so close an alliance was “within the range of practical politics.” And to this day I think it was a pity that it was ever allowed to come about. But perhaps we Highlanders are wanting in the fine arts of diplomacy and finesse.

‘However, “Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do,” as that dear Dr. Watts sings in his beautiful edition of hymns. And we were younger then, and had played a good many tricks on one another, but we had never roused the party spirit of our Highland keepers, though I suspect now they had never liked the confusion of “marches,” and hearing shots fired on their own ground.

‘To come to the point—for it seems to me the air grows colder—one lovely August night like this, fifteen years ago, the spirit of mischief descended upon Skene, and he took his keeper, Jimmy Robertson, into his unholy counsels. Skene was always fond of hot whisky toddy before retiring for the night. Whether he had had enough to make him wakeful I don’t know, but this particular evening, instead of going to bed, he called for his lately discarded shooting-boots and put them on again. Then he went

into the dining-room with a step-ladder and took down one of the best stags' heads that adorned the walls—a fine wild-looking deer that had fallen some three years before. Out into the night he and Robertson went, taking it in turns to carry that “counterfeit presentment” six miles over the hills under the uncertain moonlight at two in the morning, till they reached the hill Corrie Mohr, behind the Lodge here. It was an awkward thing to carry (an *ἄχθος οὐκ εὐάγαλον*, as our minister aptly quoted from Æschylus when he heard of the affair, or “burden by no means pleasant to embrace”) this great head with its wild bayonet-pointed antlers, over six miles of rough ground in the shimmering deceptive light, and they slipped about sadly. But at last they were at the spot they had nefariously selected—a good open bit of ground in one of our best corries, that could be easily spied from the big hill above. There are one or two patches of bracken in it, where a fat stag will often lie *perdu* very snugly by himself. (I mind this “Twelfth” one jumped up on hearing our four barrels go at the grouse.)

‘They got well into the middle of one of these patches of fern, and then piled up tussocks of heather and bits of peat till they had engineered a nice solid pedestal for the defunct animal’s head to be based upon. And there they left him, just high enough to show his antlered brows in the most natural and artless manner above the fronds of fern, and propped up on all sides by half-a-dozen stout dahlia-sticks which with the utmost forethought they had brought along with them. I never withhold praise from men that deserve it, and far be it from me to deny that in all these proceedings the Honourable George and his psalm-singing keeper manifested considerable ingenuity. And with the stag’s head thus left to the consideration of a discriminating public, homewards they went, chuckling audibly all the way, I have no doubt, as they slipped and stumbled under the fitful gleams thrown by the shamefaced moon.

‘It was only a few short hours afterwards that Mackenzie and I came stealthily over the shoulder of Corrie Mohr to our favourite spying-place, resolved “this day a stag must die.” I never remember a more beautiful morning. I had my own glass with me, and after squinting about a bit, I made out a herd of deer a long way below us, with one very tolerable beast that would serve our turn. Hoping I had anticipated Mackenzie in the find, I nudged him gently with my foot (he was lying just below me)

and murmured in dulcet tones, "There's deer below that furthest strip of heather in Corrie Beagh."

"Aweel, sir, those deer may wait. Noo, turn your glass on to the patches of bracken in that other corrie, for I have gotten sight of a stag lying by himself, that's as good a beast as we have had on the ground all the year. There's no right and left shot for ye, he's lying alone. But gin we have that stag in the larder, there's no fear but what the Lord will gie us a gude conceit o' oursel's. Noo, we'll just be up and awa' after him before he shifts his quarters, for at present he lies very cannily for us. In that fern I can bring ye to close quarters, before we open fire."

"Cautiously we crept round over the shoulder again to the back of the big hill Corrie Mohr, for we had a long *détour* to make before the wind would be right for our approach. The pains and patience exhibited that day were phenomenal; for, to say truth, the horns we had caught sight of were remarkably long, and as our ground had not long been forested then, I was very eager to make sure of such a noble trophy. It would be about eleven o'clock in the morning when Mackenzie first caught sight of his head above the bracken, it was past two before we were nearing the fateful patch of fern.

"Even then it seemed rather odd to me that, after three mortal hours expended in the flank movement, the stag should still be lying in the selfsame position; but no baleful suspicion assailed the honest stalker's breast. Of course it was likely enough that the deer had been up and feeding while we were out of sight of him.

"He's an auld fule," whispered Mac; "he's quite forgotten that his head and horns are well in view from above. If I can bring ye onward another fifty yards in safety, ye can e'en tak him in the neck without troubling his lordship to rise on our account."

"And "flat as flounders" we did crawl fifty yards nearer, keeping even our tell-tale breathing under severe control, with the rifle pushed forward and ready, lest the stag should hear us now. I think, when we finally halted and made the last preparations for going into action, I could not have been more than forty yards from the stag, and despite excitement I had a grand sight of his neck just below the chin, a deadly spot if I were near enough to land the bullet truly into it. Well, I just screwed my courage up, gradually raised myself on to one knee, and then squinted down the rifle-sights. There was a long painful pause while I steadied my throbbing frame to a motionless attitude for the shot,

but the stag never moved, and indeed deserved a medal for his cool and admirable conduct under fire.

'As I pulled trigger the smoke blew before my baffled eyes, but the wild yell of triumph that came from the crouching form beside me marked the keen appreciation with which the stalker had seen the best stag of the season roll over and die. When the smoke lifted I could see nothing but the waving ferns, but Mackenzie rose proudly to his feet, and saying, "You hae just dropped him stone dead in the bracken. I heard the bullet catch him full in the neck," made straight for the place. I, too, had heard the bullet strike, but with a curiously wooden thud that grated strangely on my accustomed ear.

'We neared the fatal spot. There was no movement among the ferns, such as would come from the convulsive leaps and struggles of the unconscious limbs, as the poor beast's spirit takes its flight. I had some queer presentiment of things being uncanny, and peering about I soon saw the tips of the horns, and then the head lying low—but *where, oh where, was the body?*

'Mac didn't say much, but he turned an ugly white as I burst out, "Well, upon my soul, this is too bad! I have seen that head often enough before over Mr. Skene's sideboard. I don't know that it will have improved the stuffer's setting of it to have a bullet sent clean into the neck."

'I must say, after a few moments, I began to laugh, but a dour malignant look came into Mackenzie's face and stayed thereon. I don't blame him overmuch. You see, it is the stalker's lifework, and so they are sorely put about by any untoward incident in the day's proceedings. Perhaps the unkindest cut of all was to see the real herd of the morning, disturbed by the shot, now trooping hastily up the hill and off our ground. That August day's work comes back to me very vividly, and even now I seem to see their forms clear and dark against the sky, as one by one they passed out of sight over the sky-line from Corrie Beagh, and we two down there in the hollow with the glass-eyed phenomenon at our feet!

'Well, I confess I should not have quarrelled myself with Skene over that, but you see there were complications. As bad luck would have it, the next day was the Games in the Glen; and of course Jimmy Robertson and poor Mackenzie met, both considerably excited with the light wine of the country, and the latter with the fresh smart of a wound that had not had time to get skinned over. Jimmy, no doubt, chuckled,

and Mac grew wroth ; from that somehow they must needs come to blows, and Skene's luckless keeper was finally sent senseless against a roadside stone that chose to come in the way. My man was locked up for disturbing the public peace by an officious rustic police constable, and Skene wrote putting the blame of what he called my keeper's "murderous tempers" upon me. I, of course, wrote back with great smartness, just to keep the ball rolling. But I was sorry afterwards, when we heard poor Robertson's head was broken by the fall against the stone. He was in bed six weeks, and my wife and I did what we could for him.

'But, there, "the quarrel is a very pretty quarrel as it stands, and we should only spoil it by trying to explain it."

'So you see something has come between old friends that will not be put right in this world, though we exchange the ordinary meaningless civilities nowadays when we meet. But, for all that, I think it is a pity.

'Ah, there is the moon at last, above the shoulder of Corrie Mohr. Won't you come indoors and have a cup of tea ?'

E. LENNOX PEEL.

On some Modern Abuses of Language.

II.

WE broke off last month with some remarks on some common abuses of speech which had led to serious confusions with regard to important points in the political and social state of ancient Rome. We will begin again with some more examples, both Greek and Roman, chosen in no certain order, but all helping to illustrate the same law. English, especially newspaper English, swarms just now with words of the class of which I have been speaking, purely technical words with a definite and narrow meaning which gets used in ways far apart indeed from that meaning, when natural English words, used in their natural meaning, would surely express the sense just as well. Clearness of thought would undoubtedly have gained if the word 'tyrant,' instead of becoming a term of vague reproach for any ruler whose doings are thought ill of, had kept its Greek, Roman, and mediæval meaning, in which it meant a ruler who has gained power by unlawful means, whether he makes a good or a bad use of his power when he has gained it. Then, to match the tyrant, there is the demagogue, who now and then grew into the tyrant. His name has become a mere term of reproach, used not so much vaguely as in a way exactly opposite to its original meaning. By a demagogue is now meant, hardly a leader of the people, for good or for evil, but one who stirs up the people, who stirs them up to mischief, and who stirs them up in some other way than by official or parliamentary action. Such a character may need a name, but it only leads to confusion to give him the name 'demagogue,' which means something quite different. No one would now apply the word 'demagogue' to a minister or a great party leader, he would hardly apply it to any member of Parliament, unless it was meant to charge the minister or member with conduct unworthy of his official or parliamentary position. It seems essential to the being of the modern 'demagogue' that his position should

not be parliamentary; one has even heard of 'demagogues declaiming in pot-houses.' Yet the essence of the Greek demagogue was that his position was parliamentary; his influence for good or for evil was won by speeches in the sovereign assembly of his commonwealth. The downfall of the word is curious, because it began so early, almost as soon as the word was used at all. Those to whom demagogues, leaders of the people, were politically inconvenient were glad to throw any kind of slur upon word and thing. So were abstract philosophers, to whom all forms of popular government were theoretically distasteful. The ancient and honourable meaning still lived on for a while in ordinary speech; but it gradually yielded to the hostile influences, and 'demagogue' became a name of reproach. Of course it never was used in the ridiculous way in which it is used now; it still expressed a parliamentary position, but no longer an honourable parliamentary position. A slighter degree of the same fate has in later times been the lot of the word 'politician.' In America it has, to say the least, a certain shade upon it; in Great Britain, it is, perhaps partly for that reason, in much less frequent use than it once was. But the writer of Grecian history finds that he has lost a good deal by the change in the meaning of the word 'demagogue.' He would fain use it as an old Greek used it, as the name of a certain class of men, a name in itself colourless, but on which each reader may put either an honourable or a dishonourable colouring, according to his own feelings towards the class of men whom it marks out. But such has been the influence of the foolish modern abuse of words that, even in a special treatise on old Greek matters, it is hard to do this, at any rate without giving a formal explanation of the sense in which the word is to be used.

The demagogue was so prominent a figure in the public life of Athens, of Syracuse, and of every other Greek democracy, that it is not wonderful that the name should be familiar to many who have no clear notion what a Greek democracy was or what was a demagogue's place in it. It is more wonderful that the institution, to our notions a very strange institution, called at Athens *ostracism* and at Syracuse *petalism*, should have been seized upon to be turned into a cant phrase. The Syracusan name has been left alone. The Athenian name is daily used in a way which no Athenian who gave a vote of ostracism, and no Athenian who underwent a vote of ostracism, could have understood. The misuse is in this case the more unpardonable, because it could have

come in only through some one wishing to show off a learning which he did not possess. It could not have come in to point an analogy, for there is nothing in the political or social life of England or of any other part of modern Europe which bears any analogy to the Athenian ostracism. When we read in the newspapers of a man being 'ostracized,' it seems to mean that he is subjected to some kind of exclusion in political or social life. It may mean that he is what, by other metaphors, is called 'cut' or 'sent to Coventry'; it may simply mean that, for some cause or other, it is an understood thing that he is shut out from office or preferment. The word does not at all imply a formal vote; it certainly does not imply that the ostracized person is in any way constrained to leave his country. It is hard to see why this state of things should be called 'ostracism'; if it must have a Greek name, it comes somewhat nearer to a kind of informal *ἀτιμία*, the state of a man who is otherwise untouched, but whom the law has deprived of the right of voting or holding office. With ostracism the kind of exclusion intended has absolutely nothing in common; the essential feature of ostracism, compulsory absence from the country, is lacking. Compulsory absence is the only way to describe it; the word 'banishment' belongs to another range of ideas. Banishment is a punishment; in the eyes of those who think the punishment deserved it is a disgrace. But ostracism was hardly a punishment, and it certainly was not a disgrace. It was a measure of precaution, which Mr. Grote excuses as a measure of precaution, as a measure which was needful for a season and which went out of use when it was no longer needed. When the state was deemed to be in danger from the disputes of two or more leading men, a vote was taken, the result of which might be that one of them was bidden to go and live abroad for ten years. He kept his property; at the end of his term he came back to all his old rights; very often a change in popular feeling called him back before the end of his term. It is indeed hard to see what such an institution as this has in common with what the newspapers call 'social ostracism'; it is just as hard to see why this last, whatever it is, cannot be spoken of in plain English.

From the mild ostracism of Athens it is a wide leap to the bloody proscriptions of Rome; but they too have had their share in the endless corruptions of language. The common misuse of the word 'proscribe' does not strike the ear quite so sharply as the word 'ostracism.' The word is not on the face of it so strange and technical; it is closely cognate with other words more

familiar than itself. And the abuse of the word has not gone so far away from the use as it has in the case of 'ostracism.' Yet the common way of using the word 'proscribe' is an abuse none the less. When we speak of a man being 'proscribed,' some shadow of the real meaning cleaves to the word; it implies that he is marked out in some way for vengeance or punishment. But it is also not uncommon to hear of things, practices, words, being 'proscribed,' when all that is meant is that they are forbidden, forbidden perhaps in some specially emphatic way. But this meaning has carried us a long way off from the proscriptions of Sulla and the triumvirs. 'Proscribere' simply means to 'write up,' to proclaim or publish; it has not in its own nature anything to do with forbidding. Only in the case of Sulla and of those who walked in his ways, the writing up was one of a very frightful kind. That is to say, Sulla put forth a list of names; he proclaimed or published or 'proscribed' the names of certain men, and the men who were thus 'proscribed' were to be killed by any one who chose. But in the mere word 'proscriptio' there was up to that moment nothing that suggested death or danger of any kind. Sulla might have 'proscribed' men's names for reward or promotion; he did 'proscribe' them for death. We have an exactly parallel case among ourselves. The word 'proclaim' is a perfectly colourless word; a new king is proclaimed; peace is proclaimed; a vast number of things are done by proclamation. But a 'proclaimed district' has a special meaning, and one which has some approach to Sulla's proscription. The district is not indeed 'proclaimed' for a general massacre; but it is 'proclaimed' for exceptional treatment, and treatment less agreeable than what goes on in other districts. Except that 'proclaim' is a common word used for other purposes, while 'proscribe' and 'proscription' mean only the act of Sulla and other things named after it, 'proclaim' might have got almost as a bad a meaning as 'proscribe.' This last word may be fairly used whenever it is applied to any thing which can really recal the doings of Sulla. There were stages in the great French Revolution which might rightly enough be called 'proscriptions'; but when all memory and likeness of the real proscription has passed away, when 'proscribe' has simply become a stronger synonym for 'forbid,' we have come to a misuse of language which is none the less a misuse because it is not quite so glaring as some of the others.

Is it too late even now to raise yet another cry against that division of the kingdom into 'the metropolis' and 'the provinces,'

which seems to come so glibly to the lips of many? With regard to 'province,' implying in its beginning a subject district, a possession, an estate, of the Roman people, as distinguished from the true Roman land itself, it is perfectly true that the word changed its meaning while the unchanged Roman Empire was still in being. When the whole Empire had gained equal rights, when the soil of Italy had lost all special privilege, the word 'province' lost its special meaning of dependence; it came to mean simply a geographical division, and Italy was mapped out into provinces no less than Britain or Syria. In this sense the word is used in some modern kingdoms, as Prussia and Italy. But in England the word has never been in formal use, except in that special ecclesiastical sense which grew in a singular way out of the older Roman use. In this sense a single 'metropolis' is not opposed to many 'provinces,' but each province calls for a metropolis as its head. But the word 'province' has often been applied to English possessions beyond sea, as in India and America, both to conquered lands and to English colonies. This was a falling back on the Roman use. In every case the lands called provinces stood in some kind of dependent relation to another land, while in some cases the actual Roman province in its fulness had come into being again. And when the phrase of 'the provinces' as opposed to 'the metropolis' came into use in England, it was not without some slight flavour of the old Roman meaning. It was meant to imply, if not dependence, at least inferiority. That is, the misuse here does not so much consist in using a word in a way altogether foreign to its real meaning as in implying a state of things which does not exist. For the law of England knows no superiority or inferiority in any part of the soil of England as compared with any other part. If there be any exception, it is the county of Middlesex, which is certainly a dependency of the city of London. It is worth while to compare the English abuse of language in this matter with the corresponding French abuse. In England the word used is not (except in the utterly distinct ecclesiastical sense) a legal term at all. The legal name of the divisions of England is 'shires' or 'counties'; but nobody ever talks of 'the metropolis and the counties.' 'The shires' is a known phrase for more than one purpose; but nobody ever talks of 'the metropolis and the shires.' But in France the legal name is used even in the cant phrase. 'Paris and the departments' are constantly opposed, as if Paris did not itself stand in, or rather form, the department of the Seine.

But it is to be noticed that the French phrase is 'Paris and the departments,' not 'the metropolis and the departments.' Indeed it is only of late years that the fashion of applying the word 'metropolis' to Paris has become at all common. And the reason is obvious. There has never been any need to call Paris by anything but its natural name. Both Paris and London started as something immeasurably smaller than either of them has been for some ages. But, as the collection of houses which practically became Paris gradually extended itself far beyond the bounds of the ancient city of Paris, the name of the city was legally extended to the whole assemblage of houses which had practically taken the place of the ancient city. In the case of London this change has never taken place. The practical London, the assemblage of houses, has grown; but the legal London, the ancient city, has not grown with it. London stands perhaps alone as an example of a city which in one sense has grown beyond all others, while in another sense it has not grown at all. It thus comes that the legal London and the real London are two very different things, as modern statesmen know very well when they try in some way to bring the two into harmony. But of this difference comes a number of uses of language. Paris, with its name extended as it was wanted, never needed to be called anything but Paris. In the other case various shifts had to be used. It would not do to pass an Act of Parliament for 'London'; for, so worded, it would have bound the city of London only. Even in common talk some forms had to be used which would avoid the difficulty. 'Town,' 'the town'—as that word is used in Steele and Addison's 'Spectator'—are examples of the kind of phrase that arose. 'The city' had a definite boundary; 'the town' was vague. The distinction between *cit  * and *ville* is common in the ancient local capitals of France; but nowhere has 'the city' so distinct a being as it has in London, because in a legal sense nothing else is 'London.' But 'metropolis' was the grandest word of all, and the vaguest of all. Till the word 'London' gets a wider legal meaning, it has saved trouble to legislate for 'the metropolis,' and to define in each Act what 'the metropolis' means. And the word, brought in by a kind of necessity in Acts of Parliament, sounded so fine that it has established itself in common talk. And somehow or other it has got to be opposed to 'provinces,' though 'metropolis' and 'provinces' are words which stand in no natural relation to one another. But I do not think that anybody has yet legislated for 'the provinces,' meaning by 'the provinces,' all England, all

Britain, all the United Kingdom, outside a boundary which is not yet formally drawn. Now mark the stages. Paris has remained Paris, because there was no reason why it should become anything else. London, or London and a good deal more, has become 'the metropolis,' because London and a good deal more needed a common name of some kind. The result is ugly, but it is almost excusable. But how about New York? New York, which is not the capital of the United States, which is not even the capital of the State of New York, which is a 'metropolis' in no sense that the word ever before bore, except that it is the seat of a Roman Catholic archbishop, is now called, at least in the grand style, 'the metropolis.' All that pertains to New York is, at least in the New York papers, 'metropolitan.' And I have seen Senators and Representatives coming—not to New York but to Washington—from other States spoken of as having come from 'the provinces.' Let us enlarge our historic faculties to conceive of Massachusetts and Virginia as 'provinces' of New York. If they are provinces, where are the proconsuls? And I wonder what readers in Philadelphia thought, if they read, as I read in a New York paper, of their great and historic city as having 'become a mere suburb of the metropolis.'

We have been speaking mainly of the misuse of technical words belonging to the political life of the old Greek and Roman commonwealth. While we are about it, we may as well go to the root of the matter. No words have got more thoroughly abused than those two most important terms of Greek political science, *aristocracy* and *democracy*. The progress of misuse in this case is very curious, and in the case of *democracy* the course of error has taken the shape of two distinct streams flowing side by side. First of all, before we define the meanings of the words, both mean forms of government, not classes of men. A Greek would say that the government of Athens was a democracy, and—unless he chose rather to use the less civil word *oligarchy*—that the government of Corinth was an aristocracy. No Greek would have spoken of any class of men in Athens, Corinth, or anywhere else, as 'the aristocracy' or 'the democracy.' The best definition that he could have given of those names would have been that, where all who enjoy civil rights enjoy also political rights, there is democracy; where political rights are confined to a part only of those who enjoy civil rights, there is aristocracy, or, as he would more likely have said, oligarchy. In strictness democracy is the rule of the whole people, aristocracy

is the rule of part of the people only. But it is not to be denied that both the word democracy, and the word *dêmos* from which it was formed, came, even in old Greek times, to be modified in meaning, specially in unfriendly mouths. *Dêmos*, like the Latin *plebs*, more distinctly like *people* as we often use the word, came very often to mean, not the whole people, but only part of the people, that part which in an oligarchy formed the excluded class. No wonder then that the word democracy, as meaning a form of government, has come, in ordinary modern use, to bear a worse colour than it does among those Greek writers who knew best what democracy was. But with this question I am not now concerned; my simple point is that the word democracy and its derivatives should be kept exclusively to express a certain form of political government. Sometimes one hears of the social state of a country being 'democratic,' though its political state is not. One has heard of a 'democratic despotism,' a contradiction in terms. It is perfectly true that democracy may change into despotism, that the demagogue may grow into the tyrant; but as soon as the government becomes despotic, it ceases to be democratic. A 'democratic' social state seems to mean one in which distinctions of rank and wealth either do not exist or do not carry with them any influence. But a democratic form of government, though it does not allow rank or wealth to have any legal privilege, in no way forbids their existence, it in no way bars them from any influence that may fall to them in any shape other than that of legal privilege. Both in Athens and in the old Swiss democracies, the sovereign people, able to bestow office on whom it would, commonly chose to bestow it on members of certain ancient and honoured families. The use of the words 'aristocracy' and 'democracy' to express a social and not a political state, is distinctly a misuse, unless it is done clearly and consciously to point an analogy or a contrast. But far worse than this is the misuse of the words to express, not forms of government, not even social states, but classes of men. 'The aristocracy' has long been a familiar phrase; 'the democracy' has lately come in to match it. Now for the misuse of the word 'aristocracy' there is some excuse; at any rate it is easy to see how it came about. A word was wanted to describe certain people who were not exactly described by the word 'nobility.' And that need comes of a fact of which I have lately had to speak in more shapes than one. England has in strictness no nobility; the growth of that specially insular institution the hereditary peerage has hindered

those who form the nobility in other lands from forming a nobility in England. Some unlucky newspaper writer, believing the Claimant to be the real Sir Roger Tichborne, called him an 'unfortunate nobleman,' and other newspaper writers were very merry at the mistake of calling a baronet a nobleman. But most likely they would not have objected to calling a real baronet, especially one of old descent, 'a member of the aristocracy.' Of the two the latter description is rather the worse; for it is a distinct abuse of language, while the other is mere ignorance of a fact. It is simply through a singular peculiarity of English society, the result of the unique course of English political development, that a person in the position of the real Sir Roger Tichborne is not looked on as a nobleman. But the word 'aristocracy,' as vulgarly used, is in itself nonsense, unless we mean, what we do not mean, a ruling patriciate like that of Venice or Ragusa. It would not be inaccurate to say of any time when the Lords were stronger than the King and the Commons that the government of England had an aristocratic tendency, that the aristocratic element in the constitution was predominant; for here would be an implied comparison with real aristocracies; it would be as much as to say that the government of England was getting like the government of Venice. It would be using the word aristocracy in its right sense as a political term. When implied in a sense merely social it is absurd. Yet we see how the misuse came about; there was a class of people who seemed to want a name; the word 'nobility,' a word with a definite meaning, would not do; so 'aristocracy,' which might mean anything that was thought good, was used instead. But why certain other people should, by an use far more recent, be called 'the democracy' is far more wonderful. This fashion helps on the mischievous delusion that democracy means the rule of a part of the people and not of the whole people. But if the political meaning conveyed were perfectly sound, the phrase would, as a phrase, be just as bad. The misuse of the word is evidently suggested by the misuse of the word 'aristocracy'; but it is yet more needless. From 'the democracy' there would seem to be only a step to that odd personified being 'the Revolution.' That is, not any particular event or chain of events, not the event of 1688 or the event of 1789, not even the long chain of events which began in 1789, but something which lives and moves and goes about and plots and shoots people and overturns trains and blows up buildings. And

yet funnier than all is the American use of the word 'democracy' to mean people of the Democratic party. We hear of 'the Democracy' of such and such a State; oddest of all, in New York we hear of 'the county Democracy.' I do not think that the Republican party is ever spoken of as 'the Republic'; one can see reasons why it is not; but the phrase would be just as good sense as the other.

One might go on for ever with other instances of the abuse of language through using words which are strictly technical in a way from which all feeling of their true technical meaning has passed away. There is one more class at which we may glance, those words which are formed from a proper name, but in which the person or people after whose name they are called is quite forgotten. The outward sign that they are forgotten seems to be when the word loses its capital letter, like the 'vandals' who make railways in North Lancashire as compared with the 'Vandals' who crossed from Spain into Africa. I will here make a confession. In the course of writing this article, I wrote the words 'pander to.' I struck them out, because I had used them without thinking of Sir Pandarus of Troy. So we have the 'Philippics' of Demosthenes, spoken against a real Philip; we have the 'Philippics' of Cicero, so called to point a direct comparison with the Philippics of Demosthenes; but we have also the 'philippic' which anybody nowadays speaks against anybody or anything, without a thought of Demosthenes and Philip or of Cicero and Antonius. Then there is the very strange new use of the word 'platonie,' the connexion of which with any 'Platonic' philosophy seems very wide indeed. The newest platonists, if we may so distinguish them from the New Platonists, seem, as far as one can make out, to be people who profess but do not practise, who promise but do not perform. I believe it is possible, by the very dim and mysterious road of 'Platonic love,' to trace this kind of platonism to the philosopher Plato, or at least to something which has been taken for the philosopher Plato; but it would seem both easier and clearer to call conduct of the kind that seems to be meant by some name which would more directly imply its meaning. This 'platonie' fashion has come in very lately, and it seems to be chiefly confined to the higher walks of political writing. But Plato naturally suggests the Academy, and one of the last oddities of language, quite kindred to 'platonie,' is the very new use of 'academic,' to mean, I rather fancy, 'unpractical.' There is

perhaps a hidden blow meant to be dealt at professors' lectures; but it is rather a dark way of aiming it. Then besides the 'vandals,' there are other nations which, to mark that they are no longer thought of as nations, have been cut down to a small first letter. The funniest case of all is that of the Myrmidons, the followers of Achilles, whose name must be used with a small *m* by thousands who have no notion that it is the name of a people at all. Perhaps this is meant to do the Myrmidons a good turn, as a people who have died out of all later history; it would certainly sound very odd to talk of any other Greek contingent before Troy, say the 'argives,' in the same fashion. Almost more amusing are the 'city arabs'; for surely the life of an 'arab' must be about as unlike that of an Arab as any two forms of life can be. The kingdom of Bohemia too, which may perhaps have a crowned king before long, may complain a little, first that the French chose to call gypsies—about whom, to be sure, Egypt may complain also—by the name of its people, and secondly that the word has in English got yet another meaning which it might perhaps be presumptuous for those who are neither literary nor artistic to attempt to define. The 'Philistine'—has he yet become the 'philistine'?—perhaps still suggests some faint notion of Goliath; but the word 'bohemian,' like the word 'myrmidon,' must be used daily by way of being smart by crowds of people who have hardly more thought that there is a kingdom on the upper Elbe than that Pèleus was held to have reigned over a people sprung from ants. It is a very odd state of mind when a word is used simply because it is not understood. All these words seem to be thought smart and effective just because there is a lurking consciousness that the word really means something quite different from what those who use it mean by it. There would be nothing funny in calling a certain manner of life 'bohemian,' if it was meant, truly or falsely, to compare that life with the life of people in Bohemia. Nor would there be anything funny in it, if there were not after all some kind of memory that there is a Bohemia to which the cant use of the word does not apply. The smartness, so far as there is any, seems to consist in a sort of half-remembered incongruity. With some of the other words there is no notion of smartness at all. He who talks of an army being 'literally decimated' or of a speaker receiving 'quite an ovation' is far above smartness. His language is very fine, but he is perfectly serious. The fineness would seem to consist in the

meaning of the word being wholly forgotten, while smartness seems to consist in its being half remembered.

The whole thing is very odd. Why do people use these out-of-the-way names, often for very simple things? Where is the temptation to talk in this way? One might have thought that, when one has anything to say, the first object was to say it in the most telling way, and that the most telling way was that which conveyed the meaning most directly. But this, I believe, would not be fine writing; it would not be giving one's writings a 'literary form.'

EDWARD A. FREEMAN.

An Idyl of the Bow.

THE kiss of May was in the air,
 The light breeze wantoned with her hair,
 No face to me was half so fair
 As that sweet face beside me.

But oh! to think that one might gain
 Her smiles, and I might plead in vain—
 To merit but a cold disdain—
 Ah me! then woe betide me!

'This day must settle it,' I sighed—
 'Say, shall we shoot or walk or ride?
 Let Dian's queenly self decide
 How we shall spend our leisure.'

With mischief in her laughing eyes,
 'I'll try my Aldred bow,' she cries,
 'And show you how to win a prize,
 And a pin-hole gold to measure.'

Our targets were of brilliant hues—
 Old-fashioned ones, which please excuse—
 A black spot with French grey we'll use
 When these are worn and old.

Yet these bright spheres the dazzling maid
 Completely banished to the shade;
 Near her each colour seemed to fade—
 The White, Black, Blue, Red, Gold.

What sunlight in the *Golden* tress!
 What mirth the *Ruby* lips express!
 Her eyes, the heavens' own loveliness,
 Of deep Italian *Blue*,

Fringed with the *Blackness* of the night!
 Her teeth, a row of pearliest *White*!
 Ah me! my target was a sight
 The Pope himself might woo!

Three arrows gracefully she shot—
 ‘How low they’re flying, are they not?
 Is it because the day’s so hot?’
 I answered, ‘Mine fly high!’

‘Pray tell me, then, your point of aim.’
 Quoth I, ‘For years, for aye the same,
Ma chérie, toujours, toi que j’aime,
 For thee my arrows fly.’

One dainty little hand I took
 In mine. How nervously it shook!
 Then o’er her came the tenderest look—
 She did not ask it back.

And as in mine it safely lies,
 I feel I’ve won my archery prize,
 Ere soft the murmured accents rise:
 ‘I’ve always loved you, Jack.’

AVONVALE.

An Apostle of the Tules.

I.

ON October 10, 1856, about four hundred people were camped in Tasajara Valley, California. It could not have been for the prospect, since a more barren, dreary, monotonous, and uninviting landscape never stretched before human eye; it could not have been for convenience or contiguity, as the nearest settlement was thirty miles away; it could not have been for health or salubrity, as the breath of the ague-haunted *tules* in the outlying Stockton marshes swept through the valley; it could not have been for space or comfort, for, encamped on an unlimited plain, men and women were huddled together as closely as in an urban tenement-house, without the freedom or decency of rural isolation; it could not have been for pleasant companionship, as dejection, mental anxiety, tears, and lamentation were the dominant expression; it was not a hurried flight from present or impending calamity, for the camp had been deliberately planned, and for a week pioneer waggons had been slowly arriving; it was not an irrevocable exodus, for some had already returned to their homes that others might take their places. It was simply a religious revival of one or two denominational sects, known as a 'camp meeting.'

A large central tent served for the assembling of the principal congregation; smaller tents served for prayer-meetings and classrooms, known to the few unbelievers as 'side shows;' while the actual dwellings of the worshippers were rudely extemporised shanties of boards and canvas, sometimes mere *corrals* or enclosures open to the cloudless sky, or more often the unhitched covered waggon which had brought them there. The singular resemblance to a circus, already profanely suggested, was carried out by a straggling fringe of boys and half-grown men on the outskirts of the encampment, acrimonious with disappointed curiosity, lazy without the careless ease of vagrancy, and vicious without the excitement of dissipation. For the coarse poverty and brutal economy of the larger arrangements, the dreary

panorama of unlovely and unwholesome domestic details always before the eyes, were hardly exciting to the senses. The circus might have been more dangerous, but scarcely more brutalising. The actors themselves, hard and aggressive through practical struggles, often warped and twisted with chronic forms of smaller diseases, or malformed and crippled through carelessness and neglect, and restless and uneasy through some vague mental distress and inquietude that they had added to their burdens, were scarcely amusing performers. The rheumatic Parkinsons, from Green Springs; the ophthalmic Filgees, from Alder Creek; the ague-stricken Harneys, from Martinez Bend; and the feeble-limbed Steptons, from Sugar Mill, might, in their combined families, have suggested a hospital rather than any other social assemblage. Even their companionship, which had little of cheerful fellowship in it, would have been grotesque but for the pathetic instinct of some mutual vague appeal from the hardness of their lives and the helplessness of their conditions that had brought them together. Nor was this appeal to a Higher Power any the less pathetic that it bore no reference whatever to their respective needs or deficiencies, but was always an invocation for a light which, when they believed they had found it, to unregenerate eyes scarcely seemed to illumine the rugged path in which their feet were continually stumbling. One might have smiled at the idea of the vendetta-following Ferguses praying for 'justification by Faith,' but the actual spectacle of old Simon Fergus, whose shot-gun was still in his waggon, offering up that appeal with streaming eyes and agonised features was painful beyond a doubt. To seek and obtain an exaltation of feeling vaguely known as 'It,' or less vaguely veiling a sacred name, was the burden of the general appeal.

The large tent had been filled, and between the exhortations a certain gloomy enthusiasm had been kept up by singing, which had the effect of continuing in an easy, rhythmical, impersonal, and irresponsible way the sympathies of the meeting. This was interrupted by a young man who rose suddenly with that spontaneity of impulse which characterised the speakers, but unlike his predecessors, he remained for a moment mute, trembling, and irresolute. The fatal hesitation seemed to check the unreasoning, monotonous flow of emotion, and to recall to some extent the reason and even the criticism of the worshippers. He stammered a prayer whose earnestness was undoubted, whose humility was but too apparent, but his words fell on faculties already benumbed

by repetition and rhythm. A slight movement of curiosity in the rear benches, and a whisper that it was the maiden effort of a new preacher, helped to prolong the interruption. A heavy man of strong physical expression sprang to the rescue with a hysterical cry of 'Glory!' and a tumultuous fluency of epithet and sacred adjuration. Still the meeting wavered. With one final paroxysmal cry, the powerful man threw his arms around his nearest neighbour and burst into silent tears. An anxious hush followed; the speaker still continued to sob on his neighbour's shoulder. Almost before the fact could be commented upon, it was noticed that the entire rank of worshippers on the bench beside him were crying also; the second and third rows were speedily dissolved in tears, until even the very youthful scoffers in the last benches suddenly found their half-hysterical laughter turned to sobs. The danger was averted, the reaction was complete; the singing commenced, and in a few moments the hapless cause of the interruption and the man who had retrieved the disaster stood together outside the tent. A horse was picketed near them.

The victor was still panting from his late exertions, and was more or less diluvial in eye and nostril, but neither eye nor nostril bore the slightest tremor of other expression. His face was stolid and perfectly in keeping with his physique—heavy, animal, and unintelligent.

'Ye oughter trusted in the Lord,' he said to the young preacher.

'But I did,' responded the young man, earnestly.

'That's it. Justifyin' yourself by works instead o' leanin' onto Him! Find Him, sez you! Git Him, sez you! Works is vain. Glory! glory!' he continued, with fluent vacuity and wandering, dull, observant eyes.

'But if I had a little more practice in class, Brother Silas, more education?'

'The letter killeth,' interrupted Brother Silas. Here his wandering eyes took dull cognizance of two female faces peering through the opening of the tent. 'No, yer mishun, Brother Gideon, is to seek Him in the by-ways, in the wilderness—where the foxes hev holes and the ravens hev their young—but not in the Temples of the people. Wot sez Sister Parsons?'

One of the female faces detached itself from the tent flaps, which it nearly resembled in colour, and brought forward an angular figure clothed in faded fustian that had taken the various shades and odours of household service.

'Brother Silas speaks well,' said Sister Parsons, with stridulous

fluency. 'It's fore-ordained. Fore-ordinashun is better nor ordinashun, saith the Lord. He shall go forth, turnin' neither to the right hand nor the left hand, and seek Him among the lost tribes and the ungodly. He shall put aside the temptashun of Mammon and the flesh.' Her eyes and those of Brother Silas here both sought the other female face, which was that of a young girl of seventeen.

'Wot sez little Sister Meely—wot sez Meely Parsons?' continued Brother Silas, as if repeating an unctuous formula.

The young girl came hesitatingly forward, and with a nervous cry of 'O Gideon!' threw herself on the breast of the young man.

For a moment they remained locked in each other's arms. In the promiscuous and fraternal embracings which were a part of the devotional exercises of the hour, the act passed without significance. The young man gently raised her face. She was young and comely, albeit marked with a half-frightened, half-vacant sorrow. 'Amen,' said Brother Gideon, gravely.

He mounted his horse and turned to go. Brother Silas had clasped his powerful arms around both women, and was holding them in a ponderous embrace.

'Go forth, young man, into the wilderness.'

The young man bowed his head, and urged his horse forward in the bleak and barren plain. In half an hour every vestige of the camp and its unwholesome surroundings was lost in the distance. It was as if the strong dessicating wind, which seemed to spring up at his horse's feet, had cleanly erased the flimsy structures from the face of the plain, swept away the lighter breath of praise and plaint, and dried up the easy flowing tears. The air was harsh but pure; the grim economy of form and shade and colour in the level plain was coarse but not vulgar; the sky above him was cold and distant, but not repellant; the moisture that had been denied his eyes at the prayer-meeting overflowed them here; the words that had choked his utterance an hour ago now rose to his lips. He threw himself from his horse, and kneeling in the withered grass—a mere atom in the boundless plain—lifted his pale face against the irresponsive blue and prayed.

He prayed that the unselfish dream of his bitter boyhood, his disappointed youth, might come to pass. He prayed that he might in higher hands become the humble instrument of good to his fellow-man. He prayed that the deficiencies of his scant education, his self-taught learning, his helpless isolation, and his

inexperience might be overlooked or reinforced by grace. He prayed that the Infinite Compassion might enlighten his ignorance and solitude with a manifestation of the Spirit; in his very weakness he prayed for some special revelation, some sign or token, some visitation or gracious unbending from that coldly lifting sky. The low sun burned the black edge of the distant *tules* with dull eating fires as he prayed, lit the dwarfed hills with a brief but ineffectual radiance, and then died out. The lingering trade winds fired a few volleys over its grave, and then lapsed into a chilly silence. The young man staggered to his feet; it was quite dark now, but the coming night had advanced a few starry vedettes so near the plain they looked like human watch-fires. For an instant he could not remember where he was. Then a light trembled far down at the entrance of the valley. Brother Gideon recognised it. It was in the lonely farmhouse of the widow of the last Circuit preacher.

II.

THE abode of the late Reverend Marvin Hiler remained in the disorganised condition he had left it when removed from his sphere of earthly uselessness and continuous accident. The straggling fence that only half enclosed the house and barn had stopped at that point where the two deacons who had each volunteered to do a day's work on it had completed their allotted time. The building of the barn had been arrested when the half load of timber contributed by Sugar Mill brethren was exhausted, and three windows given by 'Christian Seekers' at Martinez painfully accented the boarded spaces for the other three that 'Unknown Friends' in Tasajara had promised but not yet supplied. In the clearing some trees that had been felled but not taken away added to the general incompleteness.

Something of this unfinished character clung to the widow Hiler and asserted itself in her three children, one of whom was consistently posthumous. Prematurely old and prematurely disappointed, she had all the inexperience of girlhood with the cares of maternity, and kept in her family circle the freshness of an old maid's misogynistic antipathies with a certain guilty and remorseful consciousness of widowhood. She supported the meagre household to which her husband had contributed only the extra mouths to feed with reproachful astonishment and weary incapacity. She had long since grown tired of trying to make

both ends meet, of which she declared 'the Lord had taken one.' During her two years' widowhood she had waited on Providence, who by a pleasing local fiction had been made responsible for the disused and cast-off furniture and clothing which accompanied with scriptural texts found their way mysteriously into her few habitable rooms. The providential manna was not always fresh; the ravens who fed her and her little ones with flour from the Sugar Mills did not always select the best quality. Small wonder that, sitting by her lonely hearthstone—a borrowed stove that supplemented the unfinished fireplace—surrounded by her mismatched furniture, and clad in misfitting garments, she had contracted a habit of sniffing during her dreary watches. In her weaker moments she attributed it to grief; in her stronger intervals she knew that it sprang from damp and draught.

In her apathy the sound of horses' hoofs at her unprotected door even at that hour neither surprised nor alarmed her. She lifted her head as the door opened and the pale face of Gideon Deane looked into the room. She moved aside the cradle she was rocking, and taking a saucepan and tea-cup from a chair beside her, absently dusted it with her apron, and pointing to the vacant seat said, 'Take a chair,' as quietly as if he had stepped from the next room instead of the outer darkness.

'I'll put up my horse first,' said Gideon gently.

'So do,' responded the widow briefly.

Gideon led his horse across the enclosure, stumbling over the heaps of rubbish, dried chips, and weather-beaten shavings with which it was strewn, until he reached the unfinished barn, where he temporarily bestowed his beast. Then taking a rusty axe, by the faint light of the stars, he attacked one of the fallen trees with such energy that at the end of ten minutes he reappeared at the door with an armful of cut boughs and chips, which he quietly deposited behind the stove. Observing that he was still standing as if looking for something, the widow lifted her eyes and said, 'Ef it's the bucket, I reckon ye'll find it at the spring, where one of them foolish Filgee boys left it. I've been that tuckered out sens sundown, I aint had the ambition to go and tote it back.' Without a word Gideon repaired to the spring, filled the missing bucket, replaced the hoop on the loosened staves of another he found lying useless beside it, and again returned to the house. The widow once more pointed to the chair, and Gideon sat down. 'It's quite a spell sens you wos here,' said the Widow Hiler returning her foot to the cradle-rockers;

'not sens yer was ordained. Be'n practisin', I reckon, at the meetin'.'

A slight colour came into his cheek. 'My place is not there, Sister Hiler,' he said gently; 'it's for those with the gift o' tongues. I go forth only a common labourer in the vineyard.' He stopped and hesitated; he might have said more; but the widow, who was familiar with that kind of humility as the ordinary perfunctory expression of her class, suggested no sympathetic interest in his mission.

'Thar's a deal o' talk over there,' she said drily, 'and thar's folks ez thinks thar's a deal o' money spent in picknicking the Gospel that might be given to them ez wish to spread it, or to their widows and children. But that don't consarn you, Brother Gideon. Sister Parsons hez money enough to settle her darter Meely comfortably on her own land; and I've heard tell that you and Meely was only waitin' till you was ordained to be jined together. You'll hev an easier time of it, Brother Gideon, than poor Marvin Hiler had,' she continued, suppressing her tears with a certain astringency that took the place of her lost pride; 'but the Lord wills that some should be tried and some not.'

'But I am not going to marry Meely Parsons,' said Gideon quietly.

The widow took her foot from the rocker. 'Not marry Meely!' she repeated vaguely. But relapsing into her despondent mood she continued: 'Then I reckon it's true what other folks sez of Brother Silas Braggley makin' up to her and his powerful exhortin' influence over her Ma. Folks sez ez Sister Parsons hez just resigned her soul inter his keepin'.'

'Brother Silas hez a heavenly gift,' said the young man, with gentle enthusiasm; 'and perhaps it may be so. If it is, it is the Lord's will. But I do not marry Meely because my life and my ways henceforth must lie far beyond her sphere of strength. I oughtn't to drag a young inexperienced soul with me to battle and struggle in the thorny paths that I must tread.'

'I reckon you know your own mind,' said Sister Hiler grimly. 'But thar's folks ez might allow that Meely Parsons aint any better than others that she shouldn't have her share o' trials and keers and crosses. Riches and bringin' up don't exempt folks from the shadder. I married Marvin Hiler outter a house ez good ez Sister Parsons', and at a time when old Cyrus Parsons hadn't a roof to his head but the cover of the emigrant waggon he kem across the plains in. I might say ez Marvin knowed pretty well

wot it was to have a helpmeet in his ministration, if it wasn't vanity of sperit to say it now. But the flesh is weak, Brother Gideon.' Her influenza here resolved itself into unmistakable tears, which she wiped away with the first article that was accessible in the work-bag before her. As it chanced to be a black silk neckerchief of the deceased Hiler, the result was funereal, suggestive, but practically ineffective.

'You were a good wife to Brother Hiler,' said the young man gently. 'Everybody knows that.'

'It's suthin to think of since he's gone,' continued the widow, bringing her work nearer to her eyes to adjust it to their tear-dimmed focus. 'It's suthin' to lay to heart in the lonely days and nights when thar's no man round to fetch water and wood and lend a hand to doin' chores; its suthin' to remember, with his three children to feed, and little Selby, the eldest, that vain and useless that he can't even tote the baby round while I do the work of a hired man.'

'It's a hard trial, Sister Hiler,' said Gideon, 'but the Lord has His appointed time.'

Familiar as consolation by vague quotation was to Sister Hiler, there was an occult sympathy in the tone in which this was offered that lifted her for an instant out of her narrower self. She raised her eyes to his. The personal abstraction of the devotee had no place in the deep dark eyes that were lifted from the cradle to hers with a sad, discriminating, and almost womanly sympathy. Surprised out of her selfish preoccupation, she was reminded of her apparent callousness to what might be his present disappointment. Perhaps it seemed strange to her, too, that those tender eyes should go a-begging.

'Yer takin' a Christian view of yer own disappointment, Brother Gideon,' she said, with less astringency of manner; 'but every heart knoweth its own sorrer. I'll be gettin' supper now that baby's sleepin' sound, and ye'll sit by and eat.'

'If you let me help you, Sister Hiler,' said the young man with a cheerfulness that belied any overwhelming heart affection, and awakened in the widow a feminine curiosity as to his real feelings to Meely. But her further questioning was met with a frank, amiable, and simple brevity that was as puzzling as the most artful periphrase of tact. Accustomed as she was to the loquacity of grief and the confiding prolixity of disappointed lovers, she could not understand her guest's quiescent attitude. Her curiosity, however, soon gave way to the habitual contempla-

tion of her own sorrows, and she could not forego the opportune presence of a sympathising auditor to whom she could relieve her feelings. The preparations for the evening meal were therefore accompanied by a dreary monotone of lamentation. She bewailed her lost youth, her brief courtship, the struggles of her early married life, her premature widowhood, her penurious and helpless existence, the disruption of all her present ties, the hopelessness of the future. She rehearsed the unending plaint of those long evenings, set to the music of the restless wind around her bleak dwelling, with something of its stridulous reiteration. The young man listened and replied with softly assenting eyes, but without pausing in the material aid that he was quietly giving her. He had removed the cradle of the sleeping child to the bedroom, quieted the sudden wakefulness of 'Pinkey,' rearranged the straggling furniture of the sitting-room with much order and tidiness, repaired the hinges of a rebellious shutter and the lock of an unyielding door, and yet had apparently retained an unabated interest in her spoken woes. Surprised once more into recognising this devotion, Sister Hiler abruptly arrested her monologue.

'Well, if you ain't the handiest man I ever seed about a house!'

'Am I?' said Gideon, with suddenly sparkling eyes. 'Do you really think so?'

'I do.'

'Then you don't know how glad I am.' His frank face so unmistakably showed his simple gratification that the widow, after gazing at him for a moment, was suddenly seized with a bewildering fancy. The first effect of it was the abrupt withdrawal of her eyes, then a sudden effusion of blood to her forehead that finally extended to her cheek-bones, and then an interval of forgetfulness where she remained with a plate held vaguely in her hand. When she succeeded at last in putting it on the table instead of the young man's lap, she said in a voice quite unlike her own,

'Sho!'

'I mean it,' said Gideon, cheerfully. After a pause, in which he unostentatiously rearranged the table which the widow was abstractedly disorganising, he said gently, 'After tea, when you're not so much flustered with work and worry, and more composed in spirit, we'll have a little talk, Sister Hiler. I'm in no hurry to-night, and if you don't mind I'll make myself comfortable in

the barn with my blanket until sun-up to-morrow. I can get up early enough to do some odd chores round the lot before I go.'

'You know best, Brother Gideon,' said the widow, faintly, 'and if you think it's the Lord's will, and no speshal trouble to you, so do. But sakes alive! it's time I tidied myself a little,' she continued, lifting one hand to her hair, while with the other she endeavoured to fasten a buttonless collar; 'leavin' alone the vanities o' dress, it's ez much as one kin do to keep a clean rag on with the children climbin' over ye. Sit by and I'll be back in a minit.' She retired to the back room, and in a few moments returned with smoothed hair and a palm-leaf broché shawl thrown over her shoulders, which not only concealed the ravages made by time and maternity on the gown beneath, but to some extent gave her the suggestion of being a casual visitor in her own household. It must be confessed that for the rest of the evening Sister Hiler rather lent herself to this idea, possibly from the fact that it temporarily obliterated the children, and quite removed her from any responsibility in the unpicturesque household. This effect was only marred by the absence of any impression upon Gideon, who scarcely appeared to notice the change, and whose soft eyes seemed rather to identify the miserable woman under her forced disguise. He prefaced the meal with a fervent grace, to which the widow listened with something of the conscious attitude she had adopted at church during her late husband's ministration, and during the meal she ate with a like consciousness of 'company manners.'

Later that evening Selby Hiler woke up in his little truckle bed, listening to the rising midnight wind, which in his childish fancy he confounded with the sound of voices that came through the open door of the living room. He recognised the deep voice of the young minister, Gideon, and the occasional tearful responses of his mother, and he was fancying himself again at church when he heard a step, and the young preacher seemed to enter the room, and going to the bed leaned over it and kissed him on the forehead, and then bent over his little brother and sister and kissed them too. Then he slowly re-entered the living room. Lifting himself softly on his elbow, Selby saw him go up towards his mother, who was crying, with her head on the table, and kiss her also on the forehead. Then he said 'Good night,' and the front door closed, and Selby heard his footsteps crossing the lot towards the barn. His mother was still sitting with her face buried in her hands when he fell asleep.

She sat by the dying embers of the fire until the house was still again, then she rose and wiped her eyes. 'Et's a good thing,' she said, going to the bedroom door, and looking in upon her sleeping children; 'et's a mercy and a blessing for them and—for—me. But—but—he might—hev—said—he——loved me!'

III.

Although Gideon Deane contrived to find a nest for his blanket in the mouldy straw of the unfinished barn loft, he could not sleep. He restlessly watched the stars through the cracks of the boarded roof, and listened to the wind that made the half-open structure as vocal as a sea-shell, until past midnight. Once or twice he had fancied he heard the tramp of horsehoofs on the far-off trail, and now it seemed to approach nearer, mingled with the sound of voices. Gideon raised his head and looked through the doorway of the loft. He was not mistaken: two men had halted in the road before the house, and were examining it as if uncertain if it were the dwelling they were seeking, and were hesitating if they should rouse the inmates. Thinking he might spare the widow this disturbance to her slumbers, and possibly some alarm, he rose quickly, and descending to the enclosure, walked towards the house. As he approached the men advanced to meet him, and by accident or design ranged themselves on either side. A glance showed him they were strangers to the locality.

'We're lookin' fer the preacher that lives here,' said one who seemed to be the elder. 'A man by the name o' Hiler, I reckon!'

'Brother Hiler has been dead two years,' responded Gideon. 'His widow and children live here.'

The two men looked at each other. The younger one laughed; the elder mumbled something about its being 'three years ago,' and then turning suddenly on Gideon, said:

'P'raps *you're* a preacher?'

'I am.'

'Can you come to a dying man?'

'I will.'

The two men again looked at each other. 'But,' continued Gideon, softly, 'you'll please keep quiet so as not to disturb the widow and her children, while I get my horse.' He turned away; the younger man made a movement as if to stop him, but the elder quickly restrained his hand. 'He isn't goin' to run

away,' he whispered. 'Look,' he added, as Gideon a moment later reappeared mounted and equipped.

'Do you think we'll be in time?' asked the young preacher as they rode quickly away in the direction of the tules.

The younger repressed a laugh; the other answered grimly, 'I reckon.'

'And is he conscious of his danger?'

'I reckon.'

Gideon did not speak again. But as the onus of that silence seemed to rest upon the other two, the last speaker, after a few moments' silent and rapid riding, continued abruptly, 'You don't seem curious?'

'Of what?' said Gideon, lifting his soft eyes to the speaker. 'You tell me of a brother at the point of death, who seeks the Lord through an humble vessel like myself. *He* will tell me the rest.'

A silence still more constrained on the part of the two strangers followed, which they endeavoured to escape from by furious riding; so that in half-an-hour the party had reached a point where the tules began to sap the arid plain, while beyond them broadened the lagoons of the distant river. In the foreground, near a clump of dwarfed willows, a camp-fire was burning, around which fifteen or twenty armed men were collected, their horses picketed in an outer circle guarded by two mounted sentries. A blasted cotton-wood with a single black arm extended over the tules stood ominously against the dark sky.

The circle opened to receive them and closed again. The elder man dismounted, and leading Gideon to the blasted cotton-wood, pointed to a pinioned man seated at its foot with an armed guard over him. He looked up at Gideon with an amused smile.

'You said it was a dying man,' said Gideon, recoiling.

'He will be a dead man in half-an-hour,' returned the stranger.

'And you?'

'We are the Vigilantes from Alamo. This man,' pointing to the prisoner, 'is a gambler who killed a man yesterday. We hunted him here, tried him an hour ago, and found him guilty. The last man we hung here, three years ago, asked for a parson. We brought him the man who used to live where we found you. So we thought we'd give this man the same show, and brought you.'

'And if I refuse?' said Gideon.

The leader shrugged his shoulders. 'That's *his* look out, not ours. We've given him the chance. Drive ahead, boys,' he added, turning to the others; 'the parson allows he won't take a hand.'

'One moment,' said Gideon, in desperation, 'one moment, for the sake of that God you have brought me here to invoke in behalf of this wretched man. One moment, for the sake of Him in whose presence you must stand one day as he does now.' With passionate earnestness he pointed out the vindictive impulse they were mistaking for Divine justice; with pathetic fervency he fell upon his knees and implored their mercy for the culprit. But in vain. As at the camp meeting of the day before, he was chilled to find his words seemed to fall on unheeding and unsympathetic ears. He looked around on their abstracted faces; in their gloomy savage enthusiasm for expiatory sacrifice, he was horrified to find the same unreasoning exaltation that had checked his exhortations then. Only one face looked upon his, half mischievously, half compassionately. It was the prisoner's.

'Yer wastin' time on us,' said the leader, drily; 'wastin' *his* time. Hadn't you better talk to him?'

Gideon rose to his feet, pale and cold. 'He may have something to confess. May I speak with him alone?' he said, gently.

The leader motioned to the sentry to fall back. Gideon placed himself before the prisoner so that in the faint light of the camp fire the man's figure was partly hidden by his own. 'You meant well with your little bluff, pardner,' said the prisoner, not unkindly, 'but they've got the cards to win.'

'Kneel down with your back to me,' said Gideon, in a low voice. The prisoner fell on his knees. At the same time he felt Gideon's hand and the gliding of steel behind his back, and the severed cords hung loosely on his arms and legs.

'When I lift my voice to God, brother,' said Gideon, softly, 'drop on your face and crawl as far as you can in a straight line in my shadow, then break for the tules. I will stand between you and their first fire.'

'Are you mad?' said the prisoner. 'Do you think they won't fire lest they should hurt you? Man! they'll kill *you*, the first thing.'

'So be it—if your chance is better.'

Still on his knees, the man grasped Gideon's two hands in his own and devoured him with his eyes.

'You mean it?'

'I do.'

'Then,' said the prisoner, quietly, 'I reckon I'll stop and hear what you've got to say about God until they're ready.'

'You refuse to fly?'

'I reckon I was never better fitted to die than now,' said the prisoner, still grasping his hand. After a pause he added in a lower tone, 'I can't pray—but—I think,' he hesitated; 'I think I could manage to ring in in a hymn.'

'Will you try, brother?'

'Yes.'

With their hands tightly clasped together, Gideon lifted his gentle voice. The air was a common one, familiar in the local religious gatherings, and after the first verse one or two of the sullen lookers-on joined not unkindly in the refrain. But, as he went on, the air and words seemed to offer a vague expression to the dull lowering animal emotion of the savage concourse, and at the end of the second verse the refrain, augmented in volume and swelled by every voice in the camp, swept out over the hollow plain.

It was met in the distance by a far-off cry. With an oath taking the place of his supplication, the leader sprang to his feet. But too late! The cry was repeated as a nearer slogan of defiance—the plain shook—there was the tempestuous onset of furious hoofs—a dozen shots—the scattering of the embers of the camp-fire into a thousand vanishing sparks even as the lurid gathering of savage humanity was dispersed and dissipated over the plain, and Gideon and the prisoner stood alone. But as the Sheriff of Contra Costa with his rescuing *posse* swept by, the man they had come to save fell forward in Gideon's arms with a bullet in his breast—the Parthian shot of the flying Vigilante leader.

The eager crowd that surged around him with outstretched helping hands would have hustled Gideon aside. But the wounded man roused himself, and throwing an arm around the young preacher's neck, warned them back with the other. 'Stand back!' he gasped. 'He risked his life for mine! Look at him, boys! Wanted ter stand up 'twixt them hounds and me and draw their fire on himself! Ain't he just hell?' He stopped; an apologetic smile crossed his lips. 'I clean forgot, pardner; but it's all right. I said I was ready to go; and I am.' His arm slipped from Gideon's neck; he slid to the ground; he had fainted.

A dark, military-looking man pushed his way through the

crowd—the surgeon, one of the *posse*, accompanied by a younger man fastidiously dressed. The former bent over the unconscious prisoner, and tore open his shirt; the latter followed his movements with a flush of anxious inquiry in his handsome, careless face. After a moment's pause the surgeon, without looking up, answered the young man's mute questioning. 'Better send the Sheriff here at once, Jack.'

'He is here,' responded the official, joining the group.

The surgeon looked up at him. 'I am afraid they've put the case out of your jurisdiction, Sheriff,' he said grimly. 'It's only a matter of a day or two at best—perhaps only of a few hours. But he won't live to be taken back to gaol.'

'Will he live to go as far as Martinez?' asked the young man addressed as Jack.

'With care, perhaps.'

'Will you be responsible for him, Jack Hamlin?' said the Sheriff suddenly.

'I will.'

'Then take him. Stay—he's coming to.'

The wounded man slowly opened his eyes. They fell upon Jack Hamlin with a pleased look of recognition, but almost instantly and anxiously glanced around as if seeking another. Leaning over him, Jack said gaily, 'They've passed you over to me, old man; are you willing?'

The wounded man's eyes assented, but still moved restlessly from side to side.

'Is there anyone you want to go with you?'

'Yes,' said the eyes.

'The doctor, of course?'

The eyes did not answer. Gideon dropped on his knees beside him. A ray of light flashed in the helpless man's eyes and transfigured his whole face.

'You want *him*?' said Jack incredulously.

'Yes,' said the eyes.

'What—the preacher?'

The lips struggled to speak. Everybody bent down to hear his reply:

'You bet,' he said faintly.

IV.

It was early morning when the waggon containing the wounded man, Gideon, Jack Hamlin, and the surgeon, crept slowly through

the streets of Martinez and stopped before the door of the 'Palmetto Shades.' The upper floor of this saloon and hostelry was occupied by Mr. Hamlin as his private lodgings, and was fitted up with the usual luxury and more than the usual fastidiousness of his extravagant class. As the dusty and travel-worn party trod the soft carpets and brushed aside the silken hangings in their slow progress with their helpless burden to the lace-canopied and snowy couch of the young gambler, it seemed almost a profanation of some feminine seclusion. Gideon, to whom such luxury was unknown, was profoundly troubled. The voluptuous ease and sensuousness, the refinements of a life of irresponsible indulgence, affected him with a physical terror to which in his late moment of real peril he had been a stranger; the gilding and mirrors blinded his eyes; even the faint perfume seemed to him an unhallowed incense, and turned him sick and giddy. Accustomed as he had been to disease and misery in its humblest places and meanest surroundings, the wounded desperado lying in laces and fine linen seemed to him monstrous and unnatural. It required all his self-abnegation, all his sense of duty, all his deep pity, and all the instinctive tact which was born of his gentle thoughtfulness for others, to repress a shrinking. But when the miserable cause of all again opened his eyes and sought Gideon's hand, he forgot it all. Happily, Hamlin, who had been watching him with wondering but critical eyes, mistook his concern. 'Don't you worry about that gin-mill and hash-gymnasium downstairs,' he said. 'I've given the proprietor a thousand dollars to shut up shop as long as this thing lasts.' That this was done from some delicate sense of respect to the preacher's domiciliary presence, and not entirely to secure complete quiet and seclusion for the invalid, was evident from the fact that Mr. Hamlin's drawing and dining rooms, and even the hall, were filled with eager friends and inquirers. It was discomposing to Gideon to find himself almost an equal subject of interest and curiosity to the visitors. The story of his simple devotion had lost nothing by report; hats were doffed in his presence that might have grown to their wearers' heads; the boldest eyes dropped as he passed by; he had only to put his pale face out of the bedroom door and the loudest discussion, heated by drink or affection, fell to a whisper. The surgeon, who had recognised the one dominant wish of the hopelessly sinking man, gravely retired, leaving Gideon a few simple instructions and directions for their use. 'He'll last as long as he has need of you,' he said respectfully.

'My art is only second here. God help you both! When he wakes, make the most of your time.'

In a few moments he did waken, and as before turned his fading look almost instinctively on the faithful, gentle eyes that were watching him. How Gideon made the most of his time did not transpire, but at the end of an hour, when the dying man had again lapsed into unconsciousness, he softly opened the door of the sitting-room.

Hamlin started hastily to his feet. He had cleared the room of his visitors, and was alone. He turned a moment towards the window before he faced Gideon with inquiring but curiously-shining eyes.

'Well?' he said, hesitatingly.

'Do you know Kate Somers?' asked Gideon.

Hamlin opened his brown eyes. 'Yes.'

'Can you send for her?'

'What, *here*?'

'Yes, *here*.'

'What for?'

'To marry him,' said Gideon, gently. 'There's no time to lose.'

'To *marry* him?'

'He wishes it.'

'But say—O come, now,' said Hamlin confidentially, leaning back with his hands on the top of a chair. 'Aint this playing it a little—just a *little*—too low down? Of course you mean well, and all that; but come, now, say—couldn't you just let up on him there? Why, she'—Hamlin softly closed the door—'she's got no character.'

'The more reason he should give her one.'

A cynical knowledge of matrimony imparted to him by the wives of others evidently coloured Mr. Hamlin's views. 'Well, perhaps it's all the same if he's going to die. But isn't it rather rough on *her*? I don't know,' he added, reflectively; 'she was snivelling round here a little while ago, until I sent her away.'

'You sent her away!' echoed Gideon.

'I did.'

'Why?'

'Because *you* were here.'

Nevertheless Mr. Hamlin departed, and in half an hour reappeared with two brilliantly dressed women. One, hysterical, tearful, frightened, and pallid, was the destined bride; the other,

highly coloured, excited and pleasedly observant, was her friend. Two men hastily summoned from the anteroom as witnesses completed the group that moved into the bedroom and gathered round the bed.

The ceremony was simple and brief. It was well, for of all who took part in it none was more shaken by emotion than the officiating priest. The brilliant dresses of the women, the contrast of their painted faces with the waxen pallor of the dying man; the terrible incongruity of their voices, inflexions, expressions and familiarity; the mingled perfume of cosmetics and the faint odour of wine; the eyes of the younger woman following his movements with strange absorption, so affected him that he was glad when he could fall on his knees at last and bury his face in the pillow of the sufferer. The hand that had been placed in the bride's cold fingers slipped from them and mechanically sought Gideon's again. The significance of the unconscious act brought the first spontaneous tears into the woman's eyes. It was his last act, for when Gideon's voice was again lifted in prayer, the spirit for whom it was offered had risen with it, as it were still lovingly hand in hand, from the earth for ever.

The funeral was arranged for two days later, and Gideon found that his services had been so seriously yet so humbly counted upon by the friends of the dead man that he could scarce find it in his heart to tell them that it was the function of the local preacher—an older and more experienced man than himself. 'If it is,' said Jack Hamlin, coolly, 'I'm afraid he won't get a yaller dog to come to his church; but if you say you'll preach at the grave, there aint a man, woman, or child that will be kept away. Don't you go back on your luck, now; it's something awful and nigger-like. You've got this crowd where the hair is short; excuse me, but it's so. Talk of revivals! You could give that one-horse show in Tasajara a hundred points, and skunk them easily.' Indeed had Gideon been accessible to vanity, the spontaneous homage he met with everywhere would have touched him more sympathetically and kindly than it did; but in the utter unconsciousness of his own power and the quality they worshipped in him, he felt alarmed and impatient of what he believed to be their weak sympathy with his own human weakness. In the depth of his unselfish heart lit, it must be confessed, only by the scant, inefficient lamp of his youthful experience, he really believed he had failed in his apostolic mission because he had been unable to touch the hearts of the Vigilantes by oral appeal and argument.

Feeling thus, the reverence of these irreligious people that surrounded him, the facile yielding of their habits and prejudices to his half-uttered wish, appeared to him only a temptation of the flesh. No one had sought him after the manner of the camp meeting; he had converted the wounded man through a common weakness of their humanity. More than that, he was conscious of a growing fascination for the truthfulness and sincerity of that class; particularly of Mr. Jack Hamlin, whose conversion he felt he could never attempt, yet whose strange friendship alternately thrilled and frightened him.

It was the evening before the funeral. The coffin, half smothered in wreaths and flowers, stood upon trestles in the ante-room; a large silver plate bearing an inscription on which for the second time Gideon read the name of the man he had converted. It was a name associated on the frontier so often with reckless hardihood, dissipation, and blood, that even now Gideon trembled at his presumption, and was chilled by a momentary doubt of the efficiency of his labour. Drawing unconsciously nearer to the mute subject of his thoughts, he threw his arms across the coffin and buried his face between them.

A stream of soft music, the echo of some forgotten song, seemed to Gideon to suddenly fill and possess the darkened room, and then to slowly die away, like the opening and shutting of a door upon a flood of golden radiance. He listened with hushed breath and a beating heart. He had never heard anything like it before. Again the strain arose, the chords swelled round him, until from their midst a tenor voice broke high and steadfast, like a star in troubled skies. Gideon scarcely breathed. It was a hymn—but such a hymn. He had never conceived there could be such beautiful words, joined to such exquisite melody, and sung with a grace so tender and true. What were all other hymns to this ineffable yearning for light, for love, and for infinite rest? Thrilled and exalted, Gideon felt his doubts pierced and scattered by that illuminating cry. Suddenly he rose, and with a troubled thought pushed open the door to the sitting-room. It was Mr. Jack Hamlin sitting before a parlour organ. The music ceased.

‘It was *you*,’ stammered Gideon.

Jack nodded, struck a few chords by way of finish, and then wheeled round on the music-stool towards Gideon. His face was slightly flushed. ‘Yes. I used to be the organist and tenor in

our church in the States. I used to snatch the sinners bald-headed with that. Do you know I reckon I'll sing that to-morrow, if you like, and maybe afterwards we'll—but—'—he stopped—'we'll talk of that after the funeral. It's business.' Seeing Gideon still glancing with a troubled air from the organ to himself, he said: 'Would you like to try that hymn with me? Come on!'

He again struck the chords. As the whole room seemed to throb with the music, Gideon felt himself again carried away. Glancing over Jack's shoulders, he could read the words but not the notes; yet, having a quick ear for rhythm, he presently joined in with a deep but uncultivated baritone. Together they forgot everything else, and at the end of an hour were only recalled by the presence of a silently admiring concourse of votive-offering friends who had gathered round them.

The funeral took place the next day at the grave dug in the public cemetery—a green area fenced in by the palisading tules. The words of Gideon were brief but humble; the strongest partisan of the dead man could find no fault in a confession of human frailty in which the speaker humbly confessed his share, and when the hymn was started by Hamlin and taken up by Gideon, the vast multitude, drawn by interest and curiosity, joined as in a solemn Amen.

Later, when those two strangely-assorted friends had returned to Mr. Hamlin's rooms previous to Gideon's departure, the former, in a manner more serious than his habitual cynical good-humour, began, 'I said I had to talk business with you. The boys about here want to build a church for you, and are ready to plank the money down if you'll say it's a go. You understand they aren't asking you to run in opposition to that Gospel sharp—excuse me—that's here now, nor do they want you to run a side show in connection with it. They want you to be independent. They don't pin you down to any kind of religion, you know; whatever you care to give them—Methodist, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian—is mighty good enough for them, if you'll expound it. You might give a little of each, or one on one day and one another—they'll never know the difference if you only mix the drinks yourself. They'll give you a house and guarantee you fifteen hundred dollars the first year.'

He stopped and walked towards the window. The sunlight that fell upon his handsome face seemed to call back the careless smile to his lips and the reckless fire to his brown eyes. 'I don't

suppose there's a man among them that wouldn't tell you all this in a great deal better way than I do. But the darned fools—excuse me—would have *me* break it to you. Why, I don't know. I needn't tell you I like you—not only for what you did for George—but I like you for your style—for yourself. And I want you to accept. You could keep these rooms till they got a house ready for you. Together—you and me—we'd make that organ howl. But because I like it—because it's everything to us—and nothing to you, it don't seem square for me to ask it. Does it?'

Gideon replied by taking Hamlin's hand. His face was perfectly pale, but his look collected. He had not expected this offer, and yet when it was made he felt as if he had known it before—as if he had been warned of it—as if it was the great temptation of his life. Watching him with an earnestness only slightly overlaid by his usual manner, Hamlin went on.

'I know it would be lonely here, and a man like you ought to have a wife for'—he slightly lifted his eyebrows—'for example's sake. I heard there was a young lady in the case over there in Tasajara—but the old people didn't see it on account of your position. They'd jump at it now. Eh? No? Well,' continued Jack, with a decent attempt to conceal his cynical relief, 'perhaps those boys have been so eager to find out all they could do for you that they've been sold. Perhaps we're making equal fools of ourselves now in asking you to stay. But don't say no just yet—take a day or a week to think of it.'

Gideon still pale but calm, cast his eyes around the elegant room, at the magic organ, then upon the slight handsome figure before him. '*I will* think of it,' he said, in a low voice, as he pressed Jack's hand. 'And if I accept you will find me here to-morrow afternoon at this time; if I do not you will know that I keep with me wherever I go the kindness, the brotherly love, and the grace of God that prompts your offer, even though He withholds from me His blessed light, which alone can make me know His wish.' He stopped and hesitated. 'If you love me, Jack, don't ask me to stay, but pray for that light which alone can guide my feet back to you, or take me hence for ever.' He once more tightly pressed the hand of the embarrassed man before him and was gone.

Passers-by on the Martinez road that night remembered a mute and ghostly rider who, heedless of hail or greeting, moved by them as in a trance or vision. But the Widow Hiler the next morning, coming from the spring, found no abstraction or

preoccupation in the soft eyes of Gideon Deane as he suddenly appeared before her and gently relieved her of the bucket she was carrying. A quick flush of colour over her brow and cheek-bone, as if a hot iron had passed there, and a certain astringent coyness, would have embarrassed any other man than him.

‘Sho, it’s *you*. I reck’ned I’d seen the last of you.’

‘You don’t mean that, Sister Hiler?’ said Gideon, with a gentle smile.

‘Well, what with the report of your goin’s on at Martinez and improvin’ the occasion of that sinner’s death, and leadin’ a revival, I reckoned you’d hev forgotten low folks at Tasajara. And if your goin’ to be settled there in a new church, with new hearers, I reckon you’ll want new surroundings too. Things change and young folks change with ‘em.’

They had reached the house. Her breath was quick and short as if she and not Gideon had borne the burden. He placed the bucket in its accustomed place and then gently took her hand in his. The act precipitated the last drop of feeble coquetry she had retained, and the old tears took its place. Let us hope for the last time. For as Gideon stooped and lifted her ailing babe in his strong arms, he said softly, ‘Whatever God has wrought for me since we parted, I know now He has called me to but one work.’

‘And that work?’ she asked, tremulously.

‘To watch over the widow and fatherless. And with God’s blessing, sister, and His holy ordinance, I am here to stay.’

BRET HARTE.

Prince Otto :

A ROMANCE.

BOOK I.—PRINCE ERRANT.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH THE PRINCE COLLECTS OPINIONS BY THE WAY.

A LITTLE before noon Otto, by a triumph of manœuvring, effected his escape. He was quit in this way of the ponderous gratitude of Mr. Killian, and of the confidential gratitude of poor Ottilia ; but of Fritz he was not quit so readily. That young politician, brimming with mysterious glances, offered to lend his convoy as far as to the highroad ; and Otto, in fear of some residuary jealousy and for the girl's sake, had not the courage to gainsay him ; but he regarded his companion with uneasy glances, and devoutly wished the business at an end. For some time Fritz walked by the mare in silence ; and they had already traversed more than half the proposed distance when, with something of a blush, he looked up and opened fire.

‘Are you not,’ he asked, ‘what they call a socialist?’

‘Why, no,’ returned Otto, ‘not precisely what they call so. Why do you ask?’

‘I will tell you why,’ said the young man. ‘I saw from the first that you were a red progressional, and nothing but the fear of old Killian kept you back. And there, sir, you were right : old men are always cowards. But nowadays, you see, there are so many groups : you can never tell how far the likeliest kind of man may be prepared to go ; and I was never sure you were one of the strong thinkers, till you hinted about women and free love.’

‘Indeed,’ cried Otto, ‘I never said a word of such a thing.’

Not you !’ cried Fritz. ‘Never a word to compromise ! You

was sowing seed: ground-bait, our president calls it. But it's hard to deceive me, for I know all the agitators and their ways, and all the doctrines; and between you and me,' lowering his voice, 'I am myself affiliated. O, yes, I am a secret society man, and here is my medal.' And drawing out a green ribbon that he wore about his neck, he held up, for Otto's inspection, a pewter medal bearing the imprint of a Phoenix and the legend, *Libertas*. 'And so now you see you may trust me,' added Fritz. 'I am none of your ale-house talkers; I am a convinced revolutionary.' And he looked meltingly upon Otto.

'I see,' replied the Prince; 'that is very gratifying. Well, sir, the great thing for the good of one's country is, first of all, to be a good man. All springs from there. For my part, although you are right in thinking that I have to do with politics, I am unfit by intellect and temper for a leading rôle. I was intended, I fear, for a subaltern. Yet we have all something to command, Mr. Fritz, if it be only our own temper; and a man about to marry must look closely to himself. The husband's, like the prince's, is a very artificial standing; and it is hard to be kind in either. Do you follow that?'

'O, yes, I follow that,' replied the young man, sadly chop-fallen over the nature of the information he had elicited; and then brightening up: 'Is it,' he ventured, 'is it for an arsenal that you have bought the farm?'

'We'll see about that,' the Prince answered, laughing. 'You must not be too zealous. And in the meantime, if I were you, I would say nothing on the subject.'

'O, trust me, sir, for that,' cried Fritz, as he pocketed a crown. 'And you've let nothing out; for I suspected—I might say I knew it—from the first. And mind you, when a guide is required,' he added, 'I know all the forest paths.'

Otto rode away, chuckling. This talk with Fritz had vastly entertained him; nor was he altogether discontented with his bearing at the farm; men, he was able to tell himself, had behaved worse under smaller provocation. And, to harmonise all, the road and the April air were both delightful to his soul.

Up and down, and to and fro, ever mounting through the wooded foothills, the broad, white highroad wound onward into Grünewald. On either hand the pines stood coolly rooted—green moss prospering, springs welling forth between their knuckled spurs; and though some were broad and stalwart, and others spiry and slender, yet all stood firm in the same attitude

and with the same expression, like a silent army presenting arms.

The road lay all the way apart from towns and villages, which it left on either hand. Here and there, indeed, in the bottom of green glens, the Prince could spy a few congregated roofs, or perhaps above him, on a shoulder, the solitary cabin of a woodman. But the highway was an international undertaking, and with its face set for distant cities, scorned the little life of Grünewald. Hence it was exceeding solitary. Near the frontier Otto met a detachment of his own troops marching in the hot dust; and he was recognised and somewhat feebly cheered as he rode by. But from that time forth and for a long while he was alone with the great woods.

Gradually the spell of pleasure relaxed; his own thoughts returned, like stinging insects, in a cloud; and the talk of the night before, like a shower of buffets, fell upon his memory. He looked east and west for any comforter; and presently he was aware of a cross-road coming steeply down hill, and a horseman cautiously descending. A human voice or presence, like a spring in the desert, was now welcome in itself, and Otto drew bridle to await the coming of this stranger. He proved to be a very red-faced, thick-lipped countryman, with a pair of fat saddle-bags and a stone bottle at his waist; who, as soon as the Prince hailed him, jovially, if somewhat thickly, answered. At the same time he gave a beery yaw in the saddle. It was clear his bottle was no longer full.

‘Do you ride towards Mittwalden?’ asked the Prince.

‘As far as the cross-road to Tannenbrunn,’ the man replied. ‘Will you bear company?’

‘With pleasure. I have even waited for you on the chance,’ answered Otto.

By this time they were close alongside; and the man, with the countryfolk instinct, turned his cloudy vision first of all on his companion’s mount. ‘The devil!’ he cried. ‘You ride a bonny mare, friend!’ And then, his curiosity being satisfied about the essential, he turned his attention to that merely secondary matter, his companion’s face. He started. ‘The Prince!’ he cried, saluting, with another yaw that came near dismounting him. ‘I beg your pardon, your Highness, not to have reco’nised you at once.’

The Prince was vexed out of his self-possession. ‘Since you know me,’ he said, ‘it is unnecessary we should ride together. I

will precede you, if you please.' And he was about to set spur to the grey mare, when the half-drunken fellow, reaching over, laid his hand upon the rein.

'Hark you,' he said, 'prince or no prince, that is not how one man should conduct himself with another. What! You'll ride with me incog. and set me talking! But if I know you, you'll preshede me, if you please! Spy!' And the fellow, crimson with drink and injured vanity, almost spat the word into the Prince's face.

A horrid confusion came over Otto. He perceived that he had acted rudely, grossly presuming on his station. And perhaps a little shiver of physical alarm mingled with his remorse, for the fellow was very powerful and not more than half in the possession of his senses. 'Take your hand from my rein,' he said, with a sufficient assumption of command; and when the man, rather to his wonder, had obeyed: 'You should understand, sir,' he added, 'that while I might be glad to ride with you as one person of sagacity with another, and so receive your true opinions, it would amuse me very little to hear the empty compliments you would address to me as Prince.'

'You think I would lie, do you?' cried the man with the bottle, purpling deeper.

'I know you would,' returned Otto, entering entirely into his self-possession. 'You would not even show me the medal you wear about your neck.' For he had caught a glimpse of a green ribbon at the fellow's throat.

The change was instantaneous: the red face became mottled with yellow; a thick-fingered, tottering hand made a clutch at the tell-tale ribbon. 'Medal!' the man cried, wonderfully sobered. 'I have no medal.'

'Pardon me,' said the Prince. 'I will even tell you what that medal bears: a Phoenix burning, with the word *Libertas*.' The medallist remaining speechless, 'You are a pretty fellow,' continued Otto, smiling, 'to complain of incivility from the man whom you conspire to murder.'

'Murder!' protested the man. 'Nay, never that; nothing criminal for me!'

'You are strangely misinformed,' said Otto. 'Conspiracy itself is criminal, and insures the pain of death. Nay, sir, death it is; I will guarantee my accuracy. Not that you need be so deplorably affected, for I am no officer. But those who mingle with politics should look at both sides of the medal.'

'Your Highness . . . ' began the knight of the bottle.

'Nonsense! you are a Republican,' cried Otto; 'what have you to do with highnesses? But let us continue to ride forward. Since you so much desire it, I cannot find it in my heart to deprive you of my company. And for that matter, I have a question to address to you. Why, being so great a body of men—for you are a great body—fifteen thousand, I have heard, but that will be understated; am I right?'

The man gurgled in his throat.

'Why, then, being so considerable a party,' resumed Otto, 'do you not come before me boldly with your wants?—what do I say, with your commands? Have I the name of being passionately devoted to my throne? I can scarce suppose it. Come, then; show me your majority, and I will instantly resign. Tell this to your friends; assure them from me of my docility; assure them that, however they conceive of my deficiencies, they cannot suppose me more unfit to be a ruler than I do myself. I am one of the worst princes in Europe; will they improve on that?'

'Far be it from me . . . ' the man began.

'See, now, if you will not defend my government!' cried Otto. 'O, sir, if I were you, I would leave conspiracies. You are as little fit to be a conspirator as I to be a king.'

'One thing I will say out,' said the man. 'It is not so much you that we complain of; it's your lady.'

'Not a word, sir,' said the Prince; and then after a moment's pause, and in tones of some anger and contempt: 'I once more advise you to have done with politics,' he added; 'and when next I see you, let me see you sober. A morning drunkard, sir, is the last man to sit in judgment even upon the worst of princes.'

'I have had a drop, but I have not been drinking,' the man replied, triumphing in a sound distinction. 'And if I had, what then? Nobody hangs by me. But my mill is standing idle, and I blame it on your wife. Am I alone in that? Go round and ask. Where are the mills? Where are the young men that should be working? Where is the currency? All paralysed. No, sir, it is not equal; for I suffer for your faults—I pay for them, by George, out of a poor man's pocket. And what have you to do with mine? Drunk or sober, I can see my country going to hell, and I can see whose fault it is. And so now, I've said my say, and you may drag me to a stinking dungeon; what care I? I've spoke the truth, and so I'll hold hard, and not intrude upon your Highness's society.'

And the miller reined up and, clumsily enough, saluted.

'You will observe, I have not asked your name,' said Otto. 'I wish you a good ride,' and he rode on hard. But let him ride as he pleased, this interview with the miller was a choke-pear, which he could not swallow. He had begun by receiving a reproof in manners and ended by sustaining a defeat in logic, both from a man whom he despised. All his old thoughts returned with fresher venom. And by three in the afternoon, coming to the cross-roads for Beckstein, Otto decided to turn aside and dine there leisurely. Nothing at least could be worse than to go on as he was going.

In the inn at Beckstein he remarked, immediately upon his entrance, an intelligent young gentleman dining, with a book in front of him. He had his own place laid close to the reader, and with a proper apology, broke ground by asking what he read.

'I am perusing,' answered the young gentleman, 'the last work of the Herr Doctor Hohenstockwitz, cousin and librarian of your Prince here in Grünwald—a man of great erudition and some lambencies of wit.'

'I am acquainted,' said Otto, 'with the Herr Doctor, though not yet with his work.'

'Two privileges that I must envy you,' replied the young man politely: 'an honour in hand, a pleasure in the bush.'

'The Herr Doctor is a man much respected, I believe, for his attainments?' asked the Prince.

'He is, sir, a remarkable instance of the force of intellect,' replied the reader. 'Who of our young men know anything of his cousin, all reigning Prince although he be? Who but has heard of Doctor Gotthold? But intellectual merit, alone of all distinctions, has its base in nature.'

'I have the gratification of addressing a student—perhaps an author?' Otto suggested.

The young man somewhat flushed. 'I have some claim to both distinctions, sir, as you suppose,' said he; 'there is my card. I am the licentiate Roederer, author of several works on the theory and practice of politics.'

'You immensely interest me,' said the Prince; 'the more so as I gather that here in Grünwald we are on the brink of revolution. Pray, sir, since these have been your special studies, would you augur hopefully of such a movement?'

'I perceive,' said the young author, with a certain vinegary

twitch, 'that you are unacquainted with my opuscula. I am a convinced authoritarian. I share none of those illusory, Utopian fancies with which empirics blind themselves and exasperate the ignorant. The day of these ideas is, believe me, past, or at least passing.'

'When I look about me——' began Otto.

'When you look about you,' interrupted the licentiate, 'you behold the ignorant. But in the laboratory of opinion, beside the studious lamp, we begin already to discard these figments. We begin to return to nature's order, to what I might call, if I were to borrow from the language of therapeutics, the expectant treatment of abuses. You will not misunderstand me,' he continued: 'A country in the condition in which we find Grünewald, a prince such as your Prince Otto, we must explicitly condemn; they are behind the age. But I would look for a remedy not to brute convulsions, but to the natural supervenience of a more able sovereign. I should amuse you, perhaps,' added the licentiate, with a smile, 'I think I should amuse you if I were to explain my notion of a prince. We who have studied in the closet no longer, in this age, propose ourselves for active service. The paths, we have perceived, are incompatible. I would not have a student on the throne, though I would have one near by for an adviser. I would set forward as prince a man of a good, medium understanding, lively rather than deep; a man of courtly manner, possessed of the double art to ingratiate and to command; receptive, accommodating, seductive. I have been observing you since your first entrance. Well, sir, were I a subject of Grünewald I should pray heaven to set upon the seat of government just such another as yourself.'

'The devil, you would!' exclaimed the Prince.

The licentiate, Roederer, laughed most heartily. 'I thought I should astonish you,' he said. 'These are not the ideas of the masses.'

'They are not, I can assure you,' Otto said.

'Or rather,' distinguished the licentiate, 'not to-day. The time will come, however, when these ideas shall prevail.'

'You will permit me, sir, to doubt it,' said Otto.

'Modesty is always admirable,' chuckled the theorist. 'But yet I assure you, a man like you, with such a man as, say, Doctor Gotthold at your elbow, would be, for all practical issues, my ideal ruler.'

At this rate the hours sped pleasantly for Otto. But the

licentiate unfortunately slept that night at Beckstein, where he was, being dainty in the saddle and given to half stages. And to find a convoy to Mittwalden, and thus mitigate the company of his own thoughts, the Prince had to make favour with a certain party of wood merchants from various states of the empire, who had been drinking together somewhat noisily at the far end of the apartment.

The night had already fallen when they took the saddle. The merchants were very loud and mirthful ; each had a face like a nor'west moon ; and they played pranks with each others' horses, and mingled songs and choruses, and alternately remembered and forgot the companion of their ride. Otto thus combined society and solitude, hearkening now to their chattering and empty talk, now to the voices of the encircling forest. The starlit dark, the faint wood airs, the clank of the horseshoes making broken music, accorded together and attuned his mind. And he was still in a most equal temper when the party reached the top of that long hill that overlooks Mittwalden.

Down in the bottom of a bowl of forest, the lights of the little formal town glittered in a pattern, street crossing street ; away by itself on the right, the palace was glowing like a factory.

Although he knew not Otto, one of the wood merchants was a native of the state. 'There,' said he, pointing to the palace with his whip, 'there is Jezebel's inn.'

'What, do you call it that ?' cried another laughing.

'Ay, that's what they call it,' returned the Grünewalder ; and he broke into a song, which the rest, as people well acquainted with the words and air, instantly took up in chorus. Her Serene Highness Amalia Seraphina, Princess of Grünewald, was the heroine, Gondremark the hero of this ballad. Shame hissed in Otto's ears. He reined up short and sat stunned in the saddle ; and the singers continued to descend the hill without him.

The song went to a rough, swashing, popular air ; and long after the words became inaudible the swing of the music, rising and falling, echoed insult in the Prince's brain. He fled the sounds. Hard by him on his right a road struck towards the palace, and he followed it through the thick shadows and branching alleys of the park. It was a busy place on a fine summer's afternoon, when the court and burghers met and saluted ; but at that hour of the night in the early spring it was deserted to the

roosting birds. Hares rustled among the covert; here and there a statue stood glimmering, with its eternal gesture; here and there the echo of an imitation temple clattered ghostly to the trampling of the mare. Ten minutes brought him to the upper end of his own home garden, where the small stables opened, over a bridge, upon the park. The yard clock was striking the hour of ten; so was the big bell in the palace bell-tower; and, further off, the belfries of the town. About the stable all else was silent but the stamping of stalled horses and the rattle of halters. Otto dismounted; and as he did so a memory came back to him: a whisper of dishonest grooms and stolen corn, once heard, long forgotten, and now recurring in the nick of opportunity. He crossed the bridge and, going up to a window, knocked six or seven heavy blows in a particular cadence, and, as he did so, smiled. Presently a wicket was opened in the gate, and a man's head appeared in the dim starlight.

‘Nothing to-night,’ said a voice.

‘Bring a lantern,’ said the Prince.

‘Dear heart a’ mercy!’ cried the groom. ‘Who’s that?’

‘It is I, the Prince,’ replied Otto. ‘Bring a lantern, take in the mare, and let me through into the garden.’

The man remained silent for a while, his head still projecting through the wicket.

‘His Highness!’ he said at last. ‘And why did your Highness knock so strange?’

‘It is a superstition in Mittwalden,’ answered Otto, ‘that it cheapens corn.’

With a sound like a sob the groom fled. He was very white when he returned, even by the light of the lantern; and his hand trembled as he undid the fastenings and took the mare.

‘Your Highness,’ he began at last, ‘for God’s sake And there he paused, oppressed with guilt.

‘For God’s sake, what?’ asked Otto, cheerfully. ‘For God’s sake, let us have cheaper corn, say I. Good-night!’ And he strode off into the garden, leaving the groom petrified once more.

The garden descended by a succession of stone terraces to the level of the fish pond. On the far side the ground rose again, and was crowned by the confused roofs and gables of the palace. The modern pillared front, the ball-room, the great library, the princely apartments, the busy and illuminated quarters of that

great house, all faced the town. The garden side was much older; and here it was almost dark; only a few windows quietly lighted at various elevations. The great square tower rose, thinning by stages like a telescope; and on the top of all the flag hung motionless.

The garden, as it now lay in the dusk and glimmer of the starshine, breathed of April violets. Under night's cavern arch the shrubs obscurely bustled. Through the plotted terraces and down the marble stairs the Prince rapidly descended, fleeing still before uncomfortable thoughts. But, alas! from these there is no city of refuge. And now, when he was about midway of the descent, distant strains of music began to fall upon his ear from the ballroom, where the court was dancing. They reached him faint and broken, but they touched the keys of memory; and through and above them, Otto heard the ranting melody of the wood merchants' song. Mere blackness seized upon his mind. Here he was, coming home; the wife was dancing, the husband had been playing a trick upon a lackey; and meanwhile, all about them, they were a by-word to their subjects. Such a prince, such a husband, such a man, as this Otto had become! And he sped the faster onward.

Some way below he came unexpectedly upon a sentry; yet a little further, and he was challenged by a second; and as he crossed the bridge over the fish pond, an officer making the rounds stopped him once more. The parade of watch was more than usual; but curiosity was dead in Otto's mind, and he only chafed at the interruption. The porter of the back postern admitted him, and started to behold him so disordered. Thence, hasting up by private stairs and passages, he came at length unseen to his own chamber, tore off his clothes, and threw himself in the dark upon his bed. The music of the ball-room still continued to a very lively measure; and still, behind that, he heard in spirit the chorus of the merchants clanking down the hill.

BOOK II.—OF LOVE AND POLITICS.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE LIBRARY.

At a quarter before six on the following morning Doctor Gotthold was already at his desk in the library; and with a small cup of black coffee at his elbow, and an eye occasionally wandering to the busts and the long array of many-coloured books, was quietly reviewing the labours of the day before. He was a man of about forty, flaxen-haired, with refined features a little worn, and bright eyes somewhat faded. Early to bed and early to rise, his life was devoted to two things: erudition and Rhine wine. An ancient friendship existed latent between him and Otto; they rarely met, but when they did it was to take up at once the thread of their suspended intimacy. Gotthold, the virgin priest of knowledge, had envied his cousin, for half a day, when he was married; he had never envied him his throne.

Reading was not a popular diversion at the court of Grünewald; and that great, pleasant, sunshiny gallery of books and statues was, in practice, Gotthold's private cabinet. On this particular Wednesday morning, however, he had not been long about his manuscript when a door opened and the Prince stepped into the apartment. The doctor watched him as he drew near, receiving, from each of the embayed windows in succession, a flush of morning sun; and Otto looked so gay, and walked so airily, he was so well dressed and brushed and frizzled, so point-de-vice, and of such sovereign elegance, that the heart of his cousin the recluse was rather moved against him.

'Good morning, Gotthold,' said Otto, dropping in a chair.

'Good morning, Otto,' returned the librarian. 'You are an early bird. Is this an accident, or do you begin reforming?'

'It is about time, I fancy,' answered the Prince.

'I cannot imagine,' said the Doctor. 'I am too sceptical to be an ethical adviser; and as for good resolutions, I believed in them when I was young. They are the colours of hope's rainbow.'

'If you come to think of it,' said Otto, 'I am not a popular sovereign.' And with a look he changed his statement to a question.

‘Popular? Well, there I would distinguish,’ answered Gotthold, leaning back and joining the tips of his fingers. ‘There are various kinds of popularity; the bookish, which is perfectly impersonal, as unreal as the nightmare; the politician’s, a mixed variety; and yours, which is the most personal of all. Women take to you; footmen adore you; it is as natural to like you as to pat a dog; and were you a saw-miller you would be the most popular citizen in Grünewald. As a prince—well, you are in the wrong trade. It is perhaps philosophical to recognise it as you do.’

‘Perhaps philosophical?’ repeated Otto.

‘Yes, perhaps. I would not be dogmatic,’ answered Gotthold.

‘Perhaps philosophical, and certainly not virtuous,’ Otto resumed.

‘Not of a Roman virtue,’ chuckled the recluse.

Otto drew his chair nearer to the table, leaned upon it with his elbow, and looked his cousin squarely in the face. ‘In short,’ he asked, ‘not manly?’

‘Well,’ Gotthold hesitated, ‘not manly, if you will.’ And then with a laugh, ‘I did not know that you gave yourself out to be manly,’ he added. ‘It was one of the points that I inclined to like about you; inclined, I believe, to admire. The names of virtues exercise a charm on most of us; we must lay claim to all of them, however incompatible; we must all be both daring and prudent; we must all vaunt our pride and go to the stake for our humility. Not so you. Without compromise you were yourself: a pretty sight. I have always said it: none so void of all pretence as Otto.’

‘Pretence and effort both!’ cried Otto. ‘A dead dog in a canal is more alive. And the question, Gotthold, the question that I have to face is this: Can I not, with effort and self-denial, can I not become a tolerable sovereign?’

‘Never,’ replied Gotthold. ‘Dismiss the notion. And besides, dear child, you would not try.’

‘Nay, Gotthold, I am not to be put by,’ said Otto. ‘If I am constitutionally unfit to be a sovereign, what am I doing with this money, with this palace, with these guards? And I—a thief—am to execute the law on others?’

‘I admit the difficulty,’ said Gotthold.

‘Well, can I not try?’ continued Otto. ‘Am I not bound to try? And with the advice and help of such a man as you—’

‘Me!’ cried the librarian. ‘Now, God forbid!’

Otto, though he was in no very smiling humour, could not forbear to smile. 'Yet I was told last night,' he laughed, 'that with a man like me to impersonate, and a man like you to touch the springs, a very possible government could be composed.'

'Now I wonder in what diseased imagination,' Gotthold said, 'that preposterous monster saw the light of day?'

'It was one of your own trade—a writer; one Roederer,' said Otto.

'Roederer! an ignorant puppy!' cried the librarian.

'You are ungrateful,' said Otto. 'He is one of your professed admirers.'

'Is he?' cried Gotthold, obviously impressed. 'Come, that is a good account of the young man. I must read his stuff again. It is the rather to his credit, as our views are opposite. The east and west are not more opposite. Can I have converted him? But no; the incident belongs to Fairyland.'

'You are not then,' asked the Prince, 'an authoritarian?'

'I? God bless me, no!' said Gotthold. 'I am a red, dear child.'

'That brings me then to my next point, and by a natural transition. If I am so clearly unfitted for my post,' the Prince asked; 'if my friends admit it, if my subjects clamour for my downfall, if revolution is preparing at this hour, must I not go forth to meet the inevitable? should I not save these horrors and be done with these absurdities? in a word, should I not abdicate? O, believe me, I feel the ridicule, the vast abuse of language,' he added, wincing, 'but even a principulus like me cannot resign; he must make a great gesture, and come buskined forth, and abdicate.'

'Ay,' said Gotthold, 'or else stay where he is. What gnat has bitten you to-day? Do you not know that you are touching, with lay hands, the very holiest inwards of philosophy, where madness dwells? Ay, Otto, madness; for in the serene temples of the wise, the inmost shrine, which we keep locked, is full of spiders' webs. All men, all, are fundamentally useless; nature but tolerates, she does not need, she does not use them: sterile flowers! All—down to the fellow swinking in a byre, whom fools point out for the exception—all are useless; all labour, making ropes of sand; or like a child that has breathed upon a window, write and obliterate, write and obliterate, idle words! Talk of it no more. That way, I tell you, madness lies.' The speaker rose from his chair and then sat down again. He laughed a little

laugh, and then, changing his tone, resumed: 'Yes, dear child, we are not here to do battle with giants; we are here to be happy like the flowers, if we can be. It is because you could, that I have always secretly admired you. Cling to that trade; believe me, it is the right one. Be happy, be idle, be airy. To the devil with all casuistry! and leave the state to Gondremark, as heretofore. He does it well enough, they say; and his vanity enjoys the situation.'

'Gotthold,' cried Otto, 'what is this to me? Useless is not the question; I cannot rest at uselessness; I must be useful or I must be noxious—one or other. I grant you the whole thing, prince and principality alike, is pure absurdity, a stroke of satire, and that a banker or the man who keeps an inn has graver duties. But now, when I have washed my hands of it three years, and left all—labour, responsibility, and honour and enjoyment too, if there be any—to Gondremark and to—Seraphina——' He hesitated at the name, and Gotthold glanced aside. 'Well,' the Prince continued, 'what has come of it? Taxes, army, cannon—why, it's like a box of lead soldiers! And the people sick at the folly of it all, and fired with the injustice! And war, too—I hear of war—war in this teapot! What a complication of absurdity and disgrace! And when the inevitable end arrives—the revolution—who will be to blame in the sight of God, who will be gibbeted in public opinion? I! Prince Puppet!'

'I thought you had despised public opinion,' said Gotthold.

'I did,' said Otto, sombrely, 'but now I do not. I am growing old. And then, Gotthold, there is Seraphina. She is loathed in this country that I brought her to and suffered her to spoil. Yes, I gave it her as a plaything, and she has broken it: a fine Prince, an admirable Princess! Even her life—I ask you, Gotthold, is her life safe?'

'It is safe enough to-day,' replied the librarian; 'but since you ask me seriously, I would not answer for to-morrow. She is ill-advised.'

'And by whom? By this Gondremark, to whom you counsel me to leave my country,' cried the Prince. 'Rare advice! The course that I have been following all these years, to come at last to this. O, ill-advised! if that were all! See now, there is no sense in beating about the bush between two men: you know what scandal says of her?'

Gotthold, with pursed lips, silently nodded.

'Well, come, you are not very cheering as to my conduct as

the Prince; have I even done my duty as a husband?' Otto asked.

'Nay, nay,' said Gotthold, earnestly and eagerly, 'this is another chapter. I am an old celibate, an old monk. I cannot advise you in your marriage.'

'Nor do I require advice,' said Otto, rising. 'All of this must cease.' And he began to walk to and fro with his hands behind his back.

'Well, Otto, may God guide you!' said Gotthold, after a considerable silence. 'I cannot.'

'From what does all this spring?' said the Prince, stopping in his walk. 'What am I to call it? Diffidence? The fear of ridicule? Inverted vanity? What matter names, if it has brought me here? I could never bear to be bustling about nothing; I was ashamed of this toy kingdom from the first beginning; I could not tolerate that people should fancy I believed in it—a thing so patently absurd! I would do nothing that cannot be done smiling. I have a sense of humour forsooth! I must know better than my maker. And it was the same thing in my marriage,' he added more hoarsely. 'I did not believe this girl could care for me; I must not intrude; I must preserve the foppery of my indifference. What an impotent picture!'

'Ay, we have the same blood,' moralised Gotthold. 'You are drawing, with fine strokes, the character of the born sceptic.'

'Sceptic?—coward!' cried Otto. 'Coward is the word. A springless, putty-hearted, cowering coward!'

And as the Prince rapped out the words in tones of unusual vigour, a little, stout, old gentleman, opening a door behind Gotthold, received them fairly in the face. With his parrot's beak for a nose, his pursed mouth, his little goggling eyes, he was the picture of formality; and in ordinary circumstances, strutting behind the drum of his corporation, he impressed the beholder with a certain air of frozen dignity and wisdom. But at the smallest contrariety, his trembling hands and disconnected gestures betrayed the weakness at the root. And now, when he was thus surprisingly received in that library of Mittwalden Palace, which was the customary haunt of silence, his hands went up into the air as if he had been shot, and he cried aloud with the scream of an old woman.

'O!' he gasped, recovering, 'Your Highness! I beg ten thousand pardons. But your Highness at such an hour in the library!—a circumstance so unusual as your Highness's presence was a thing I could not be expected to foresee.'

'There is no harm done, Herr Cancellarius,' said Otto.

'I came upon the errand of a moment: some papers I left over night with the Herr Doctor,' said the Chancellor of Grünewald. 'Herr Doctor, if you will kindly give me them, I will intrude no longer.'

Gotthold unlocked a drawer and handed a bundle of manuscript to the old gentleman, who prepared, with fitting salutations, to take his departure.

Herr Greisengesang, since we have met,' said Otto, 'let us talk.'

'I am honoured by his Highness's commands,' replied the Chancellor.

'All has been quiet since I left?' asked the Prince, resuming his seat.

'The usual business, your Highness,' answered Greisengesang; 'punctual trifles: huge, indeed, if neglected, but trifles when discharged. Your Highness is most zealously obeyed.'

'Obeyed, Herr Cancellarius?' returned the Prince. 'And when have I obliged you with an order? Replaced, let us rather say. But to touch upon these trifles; instance me a few.'

'The routine of government, from which your Highness has so wisely dissociated his leisure,' began Greisengesang.

'We will leave my leisure, sir,' said Otto. 'Approach the facts.'

'The routine of business was proceeded with,' replied the official, now visibly twittering.

'It is very strange, Herr Cancellarius, that you should so persistently avoid my questions,' said the Prince. 'You tempt me to suppose a purpose in your dulness. I have asked you whether all was quiet; do me the pleasure to reply.'

'Perfectly—O, perfectly quiet,' jerked the ancient puppet, with every signal of untruth.

'I make a note of these words,' said the Prince gravely. 'You assure me, your sovereign, that since the date of my departure, nothing has occurred of which you owe me an account.'

'I take your Highness, I take the Herr Doctor to witness,' cried Greisengesang, 'that I have had no such expression.'

'Halt!' said the Prince; and then, after a pause: 'Herr Greisengesang, you are an old man, and you served my father before you served me,' he added. 'It consists neither with your dignity nor mine, that you should babble excuses and stumble possibly upon untruths. Collect your thoughts; and then categorically inform me of all you have been charged to hide.'

Gotthold, stooping very low over his desk, appeared to have resumed his labours; but his shoulders heaved with subterranean merriment. The Prince waited, drawing his handkerchief quietly through his fingers.

'Your Highness, in this informal manner,' said the old gentleman at last, 'and being unavoidably deprived of documents, it would be difficult, it would be impossible, to do justice to the somewhat grave occurrences which have transpired.'

'I will not criticise your attitude,' replied the Prince. 'I desire that, between you and me, all should be done gently; for I have not forgotten, my old friend, that you were kind to me from the first, and for a period of years a faithful servant. I will thus dismiss the matters on which you waive immediate inquiry. But you have certain papers actually in your hand. Come, Herr Greisengesang, there is at least one point for which you have authority. Enlighten me on that.'

'On that?' cried the old gentleman. 'O, that is a trifle; a matter, your Highness, of police; a detail of a purely administrative order. These are simply a selection of papers seized upon the English traveller.'

'Seized?' echoed Otto. 'In what sense? Explain yourself.'

'Sir John Crabtree,' interposed Gotthold, looking up, 'was arrested yesterday evening.'

'Is this so, Herr Cancellarius?' demanded Otto sternly.

'It was judged right, your Highness,' protested Greisengesang. 'The decree was in due form, invested with your Highness's authority by procuration. I am but an agent; I had no status to prevent the measure.'

'This man, my guest, has been arrested,' said the Prince. 'On what grounds, sir? With what colour of pretence?'

The Chancellor stammered.

'Your Highness will perhaps find the reason in these documents,' said Gotthold, pointing with the tail of his pen.

Otto thanked his cousin with a look. 'Give them to me,' he said, addressing the Chancellor.

But that gentleman visibly hesitated to obey. 'Baron von Gondremark,' he said, 'has made the affair his own. I am in this case a mere messenger; and as such, I am not clothed with any capacity to communicate the documents I carry. Herr Doctor, I am convinced you will not fail to bear me out.'

'I have heard a great deal of nonsense,' said Gotthold, 'and most of it from you; but this beats all.'

'Come, sir,' said Otto, rising, 'the papers. I command.'
Herr Greisengesang instantly gave way.

'With your Highness's permission,' he said, 'and laying at his feet my most submissive apologies, I will now hasten to attend his further orders in the Chancery.'

'Herr Cancellarius, do you see this chair?' said Otto. 'There is where you shall attend my further orders. O, now, no more!' he cried, with a gesture, as the old man opened his lips. 'You have sufficiently marked your zeal to your employer; and I begin to weary of a moderation you abuse.'

The Chancellor moved to the appointed chair and took his seat in silence.

'And now,' said Otto, opening the roll, 'what is all this? it looks like the manuscript of a book.'

'It is,' said Gotthold, 'the manuscript of a book of travels.'

'You have read it, Doctor Hohenstockwitz?' asked the Prince.

'Nay, I but saw the title page,' replied Gotthold. 'But the roll was given to me open, and I heard no word of any secrecy.'

Otto dealt the Chancellor an angry glance.

'I see,' he went on. 'The papers of an author seized at this date of the world's history, in a state so petty and so ignorant as Grünewald, here is indeed an ignominious folly. Sir,' to the Chancellor, 'I marvel to find you in so scurvy an employment. On your conduct to your Prince I will not dwell; but to descend to be a spy! For what else can it be called? To seize the papers of this gentleman, the private papers of a stranger, the toil of a life, perhaps—to open, and to read them. And what have we to do with books? The Herr Doctor might perhaps be asked for his advice; but we have no *index expurgatorius* in Grünewald. Had we but that, we should be the most absolute parody and farce upon this tawdry earth.'

Yet, even while Otto spoke, he had continued to unfold the roll; and now, when it lay fully open, his eye rested on the title page elaborately written in red ink. It ran thus:

'Memoirs
of a Visit to the Various
Courts of Europe
by
Sir John Crabtree, Baronet.'

Below was a list of chapters, each bearing the name of one of

the European Courts; and among these the nineteenth and the last upon the list was dedicated to Grünewald.

'Ah! the Court of Grünewald!' said Otto, 'that should be droll reading.' And his curiosity itched for it.

'A methodical dog, this English Baronet,' said Gotthold. 'Each chapter written and finished on the spot. I shall look for his work when it appears.'

'It would be odd, now, just to glance at it,' said Otto, wavering.

Gotthold's brow darkened, and he looked out of window.

But though the Prince comprehended the reproof, his weakness was greater than his strength. 'I will,' he said, with an uneasy laugh, 'I will, I think, just glance at it.'

So saying, he resumed his seat and spread the traveller's manuscript upon the table.

CHAPTER II.

'ON THE COURT OF GRÜNEWALD,' BEING A PORTION OF THE TRAVELLER'S MANUSCRIPT.

It may well be asked (*it was thus the English traveller began his nineteenth chapter*) why I should have chosen Grünewald out of so many other states equally petty, formal, dull, and corrupt. Accident, indeed, decided, and not I; but I have seen no reason to regret my visit. The spectacle of this small society macerating in its own abuses was not perhaps instructive, but I have found it exceedingly diverting.

The reigning Prince, Otto Johann Friedrich, a young man of imperfect education, questionable valour, and no scintilla of capacity, has fallen into entire public contempt. It was with difficulty that I obtained an interview, for he is frequently absent from a court where his presence is unheeded, and where his only rôle is to be a cloak for the amours of his wife. At last, however, on the third occasion when I visited the palace, I found this sovereign in the exercise of his inglorious function, with the wife on one hand and the lover on the other. He is not ill-looking; he has hair of a ruddy gold, which naturally curls, and his eyes are dark, a combination which I always regard as the mark of some congenital deficiency, physical or moral; his features are irregular but pleasing; the nose perhaps a little short, and the

mouth a little womanish; his address is excellent, and he can express himself with point. But to pierce below these externals is to come on a vacuity of any sterling quality, a deliquescence of the moral nature, a frivolity and inconsequence of purpose that mark the nearly perfect fruit of a decadent age. He has a worthless smattering of many subjects, but a grasp of none. 'I soon weary of a pursuit,' he said to me, laughing; it would almost appear as if he took a pride in his incapacity and lack of moral courage. The results of his dilettantism are to be seen in every field; he is a bad fencer, a second-rate horseman, dancer, shot; he sings—I have heard him—and he sings like a child; he writes intolerable verses in more than doubtful French; he acts like the common amateur; and in short there is no end to the number of the things that he does, and does badly. His one manly taste is for the chase. In sum, he is but a plexus of weaknesses; the singing chambermaid of the stage, tricked out in man's apparel and mounted on a circus horse. I have seen this poor phantom of a Prince riding out alone or with a few huntsmen, disregarded by all, and I have been even grieved for the bearer of so futile and melancholy an existence. The last Merovingians may have looked not otherwise.

The Princess Amalia Seraphina, a daughter of the Grand Ducal house of Toggenburg-Tannhäuser, would be equally inconsiderable if she were not a cutting instrument in the hands of an ambitious man. She is much younger than the Prince, a girl of two-and-twenty, sick with vanity, superficially clever, and fundamentally a fool. She has a red-brown, rolling eye, too large for her face, and with sparks of both levity and ferocity; her forehead is high and narrow, her figure thin and a little stooping. Her manners, her conversation, which she interlards with French, her very tastes and ambitions, are alike assumed; and the assumption is ungracefully apparent: Hoyden playing Cleopatra. I should judge her to be incapable of truth. In private life a girl of this description embroils the peace of families, walks attended by a troop of scowling swains, and passes, once at least, through the divorce court; it is a common and, except to the cynic, an uninteresting type. On the throne, however, and in the hands of a man like Gondremark, she may become the authoress of serious public evils.

Gondremark, the true ruler of this unfortunate country, is a more complex study. His position in Grünewald, to which he is a foreigner, is eminently false; and that he should maintain it as

he does, a very miracle of impudence and dexterity. His speech, his face, his policy, are all double: heads and tails. Which of the two extremes may be his actual design, he were a bold man who should offer to decide. Yet I will hazard the guess that he follows both experimentally, and awaits, at the hand of destiny, one of those directing hints of which she is so lavish to the wise.

On the one hand, as *Maire de Palais* to the incompetent Otto, and using the love-sick Princess for a tool and mouthpiece, he pursues a policy of arbitrary power and territorial aggrandisement. He has called out the whole capable male population of the state to military service; he has bought cannon; he has tempted away promising officers from foreign armies; and he now begins, in his international relations, to assume the swaggering port and the vague, threatful language of a bully. The idea of extending *Grünwald* may appear absurd, but the little state is advantageously placed, its neighbours are all defenceless; and if at any moment the jealousies of the greater courts should neutralise each other, an active policy might double the principality both in population and extent. Certainly at least the scheme is entertained in the court of *Mittwalden*; nor do I myself regard it as entirely desperate. The margravate of *Brandenburgh* has grown from as small beginnings to a formidable power; and though it is late in the day to try adventurous policies, and the age of war seems ended, Fortune, we must not forget, still blindly turns her wheel for men and nations. Concurrently with, and tributary to, these warlike preparations, crushing taxes have been levied, journals have been suppressed, and the country, which three years ago was prosperous and happy, now stagnates in a forced inaction, gold has become a curiosity, and the mills stand idle on the mountain streams.

On the other hand, in his second capacity of popular tribune, *Gondremark* is the incarnation of the free lodges, and sits at the centre of an organised conspiracy against the state. To any such movement my sympathies were early acquired, and I would not willingly let fall a word that might embarrass or retard the revolution. But to show that I speak of knowledge, and not as the reporter of mere gossip, I may mention that I have myself been present at a meeting where the details of a republican Constitution were minutely debated and arranged; and I may add that *Gondremark* was throughout referred to by the speakers as their captain in action and the arbiter of their disputes. He has taught his dupes (for so I must regard them) that his power of

resistance to the Princess is limited, and at each fresh stretch of authority persuades them, with specious reasons, to postpone the hour of insurrection. Thus (to give some instances of his astute diplomacy) he salved over the decree enforcing military service, under the plea that to be well drilled and exercised in arms was ever a necessary preparation for revolt. And the other day, when it began to be rumoured abroad that a war was being forced on a reluctant neighbour, the Grand Duke of Gerolstein, and I made sure it would be the signal for an instant rising, I was struck dumb with wonder to find that even this had been prepared and was to be accepted. I went from one to another in the Liberal camp, and all were in the same story, all had been drilled and schooled and fitted out with vacuous argument. 'The lads had better see some real fighting,' they said; 'and besides, it will be as well to capture Gerolstein: we can then extend to our neighbours the blessing of liberty on the same day that we snatch it for ourselves; and the Republic will be all the stronger to resist, if the kings of Europe should band themselves together to reduce it.' I know not which of the two I should admire the more: the simplicity of the multitude or the audacity of the adventurer. But such are the subtleties, such the quibbling reasons, with which he blinds and leads this people. How long a course so tortuous can be pursued with safety I am incapable of guessing; not long, one would suppose; and yet this singular man has been treading the mazes for five years, and his favour at court and his popularity among the lodges still endure unbroken.

I have the privilege of slightly knowing him. Heavily and somewhat clumsily built, of a vast, disjointed, rambling frame, he can still pull himself together and figure, not without admiration, in the saloon or the ball-room. His hue and temperament are plentifully bilious; he has a saturnine eye; his cheek is of a dark blue where he has been shaven. Essentially he is to be numbered among the man-haters, a convinced contemner of his fellows. Yet he is himself of a commonplace ambition and greedy of applause. In talk, he is remarkable for a thirst of information, loving rather to hear than to communicate; for sound and studious views; and, judging by the extreme short-sightedness of common politicians, for a remarkable prevision of events. All this, however, without grace, pleasantry, or charm, heavily set forth, with a dull countenance. In our numerous conversations, although he has always heard me with deference, I have been conscious throughout of a sort of ponderous finessing,

hard to tolerate. He produces none of the effect of a gentleman; devoid not merely of pleasantry, but of all attention or communicative warmth of bearing. No gentleman, besides, would so parade his amours with the Princess; still less repay the Prince for his long-suffering with a studied insolence of demeanour and the fabrication of insulting nicknames, such as Prince Feather-head, which run from ear to ear and create a laugh throughout the country. Gondremark has thus some of the clumsier characters of the self-made man, combined with an inordinate, almost a besotted, pride of intellect and birth. Heavy, bilious, selfish, inornate, he sits upon this court and country like an incubus.

But it is probable that he preserves softer gifts for necessary purposes. Indeed, it is certain, although he vouchsafed none of it to me, that this cold and stolid politician possesses to a great degree the art of ingratiation, and can be all things to all men. Hence there has probably sprung up the idle legend that, in private life, he is a gross, romping voluptuary. Nothing, at least, can well be more surprising than the terms of his connection with the Princess. Older than her husband, certainly uglier, and, according to the feeble ideas common among women, in every particular less pleasing, he has not only seized the complete command of all her thought and action, but has imposed upon her in public a humiliating part. I do not here refer to the complete sacrifice of every rag of her reputation; for to many women these extremities are in themselves attractive. But there is about the court a certain lady of a dishevelled reputation, a Countess von Rosen, wife or widow of a cloudy count, no longer in her second youth and already bereft of some of her attractions, who unequivocally occupies the station of the baron's mistress. I had thought, at first, that she was but a hired accomplice, a mere blind or buffer for the more important sinner. A few hours' acquaintance with Madam von Rosen for ever dispelled the illusion. She is one rather to make than to prevent a scandal; and she values none of those bribes—money, honours, or employment—with which the situation might be gilded. Indeed, as a person frankly bad, she pleased me, in the court of Grünewald, like a piece of nature.

The power of this man over the Princess is, therefore, without bounds. She has sacrificed, to the adoration with which he has inspired her, not only her marriage vow and every shred of public decency, but that vice of jealousy which is so much dearer to the

female sex than either intrinsic honour or outward consideration. Nay, more: a young, although not a very attractive woman, and a Princess both by birth and fact, she submits to the triumphant rivalry of one who might be her mother as to years, and who is so manifestly her inferior in station. This is one of the mysteries of the human heart. But the rage of illicit love, when it is once indulged, appears to grow by feeding; and to a person of the character and temperament of this unfortunate young lady, almost any depth of degradation is within the reach of possibility.

(To be continued.)

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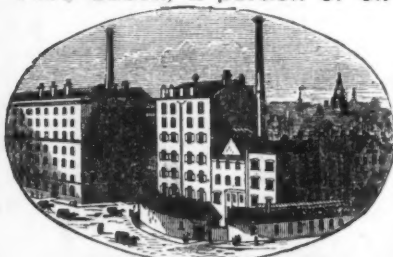
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